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**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN
AFGHANISTAN**

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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**HEARING HELD
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ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, March 13, 2014.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. “BUCK” MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COM- MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The committee meets to receive testimony on recent developments in Afghanistan. Joining us today is General Joseph Dunford, the Commander of International Security and Assistance Force, ISAF, and U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

General, this committee knows that your mission in Afghanistan is at a critical juncture, and we appreciate you taking time to come home. We know that you have got lots of demands over there. It gives us an important opportunity to find out what is going on. We want to thank you for your superb leadership and the things that you have been able to accomplish over there.

Today, approximately 34,000 U.S. troops and approximately 19,000 international troops from 49 nations continue to work as part of an international coalition to help Afghanistan continue its transition to self-governance and become a secure and stable nation.

Yet, as we convene this hearing, the future of our commitment to Afghanistan is uncertain. President Karzai is undermining his own people’s security. He refuses to sign the bilateral security agreement [BSA].

Last month, he broke an international commitment by releasing 65 terrorists held in Afghan custody, all of whom were associated with groups who have killed both U.S. troops and Afghan civilians, including the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and Haqqani Network.

Last week, we learned President Karzai was disbanding the security force that currently provides static security at U.S. bases and logistics convoys in Afghanistan. Afghans and Americans alike should be outraged by these tactics.

But we need not pin our hopes on one man, especially one who will no longer be President in just a few months. The Afghan people continue to be amazing allies. The Loya Jirga supported the BSA and said it should be signed immediately. That is 2,500 lead-

ers from all around the country representing the people of that nation. Polls show that 70 percent of Afghans want us to stay.

There is also an election coming up, and many of the presidential candidates—or most of them—publicly support the BSA with the United States. Afghanistan and the region are extremely complex; nonetheless, the United States military continues to execute their mission with skill.

And we continue to have vital national security interests in the region. We must ensure that Al Qaeda cannot use Afghanistan as a launching pad to attack the United States again. This requires a national commitment to see the mission through. That starts with the President.

I recently gave a speech about Afghanistan, and I noted that counterinsurgencies have two fronts—the one out there and the one right here. The troops and you, General, have held the line out there. The President must hold the line here.

By rarely discussing what is at stake in Afghanistan and allowing public support for the war to erode, the President has lost political capital that could have been used to solve a number of problems.

On the other hand, I believe a safe and secure Afghanistan is within our grasp. The biggest uncertainties we face in Afghanistan are no longer military.

The President has sustained international support for this new democracy. He went out and obtained international commitments for billions of dollars in aid to help lift them out of despair.

He kept the coalition of countries willing to send troops to fight with us and, as a direct result of his military strategy, Afghanistan is freer and America is safer.

For that, I congratulate him. That is why I think he should talk to the American people about it and take credit for that.

General Dunford, I hope you can help remind the American people and our political decisionmakers here in Washington what is at stake. I expect that you will provide this committee, as you do with the President, your best military judgment on the post-2014 mission set and associated presence necessary to continue fighting terrorist threats and to sustain a secure environment for the Afghan people. And I look forward to your testimony.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 41.]

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join you in welcoming General Dunford here before our committee, recognizing the hard work you have to do in Afghanistan and appreciating you taking the time to come back and keep us informed, because that is part of the mission as well, is making sure that Congress knows what is going on. And I really appreciate you taking the time to do that.

And I also congratulate you and the forces over there that have, you know, fought so well for so long and the progress that has been

made. As the chairman mentioned, we are down to 34,000 U.S. personnel from a peak of just over a hundred thousand; and, yet, during that timeframe, the security situation has arguably gotten at least slightly better. It certainly has gotten no worse, which shows that the transition to Afghan responsibility for security is, in fact, working.

And the only reason that transition is working is because of the hard work that you, the people who serve under you, and our coalition partners have done to train that force and, I think, as importantly, to be willing to let them take over, knowing that, you know, given our military is the most capable in the world, there is no way that anyone we turn a security job over to is going to do as well as we would.

But we have to do it because they have to be responsible for security in their own country. Long term, a foreign occupying force is not going to be able to bring security to Afghanistan. It is going to have to be locally driven. You made the tough decisions to begin that transition and, by and large, that transition is working.

Now, we don't have any illusions here. There is no time soon that Afghanistan is going to be, you know, a peaceful place. There are still too many factions, still too much violence, and there will be long term. Our goal here is not to completely eliminate the insurgency in Afghanistan.

Our goal is to have a strong enough Afghan security force and a strong enough Afghan government that it can stand, that it can make sure that it keeps down that insurgency and, as the chairman mentioned, keeps Al Qaeda and other affiliated groups from being able to once again find a secure base inside of that country. And with that goal in mind, I think we are making an enormous amount of progress.

Now, the key is to successfully complete that transition. And for years now I have been a strong advocate of drawing down our presence in Afghanistan. I have not wanted us to stay there as long as some others have or in as great of numbers.

But, nonetheless, I recognize that we have to do that responsibly. If in our desire to be rid of this difficult problem we were simply to rush towards the exits, we would create an even bigger problem. And I think we have done that. I think we are moving in a responsible direction.

But as the chairman mentioned, we now face some significant challenges in completing that, and I would hate to see us, you know, lose that orderly transition in the final months and years of it.

President Karzai presents the biggest challenge there. We have a bilateral security agreement that the overwhelming majority of Afghans support, but the President refuses to sign. We need that bilateral security agreement.

One of the things I will be very interested in hearing your opinion on is if we can, in fact, wait for the next President. The elections are, as mentioned, on April 5. That is the other big part of the transition. This will be the first time since the Taliban fell that we will have a transition of government in Afghanistan, which is always a tricky business.

So doing that successfully, getting a BSA in place, I think are critical, because I do think—if at the end of 2014 all U.S. and coalition troops were pulled out, I think it would be a disaster.

We need to continue an orderly transition to do that. It seems like the number of troops—somewhere between 8,000 and 12,000, as has been discussed—makes a great deal of sense, to continue with the training mission, to continue support, and continue with the counterterrorism mission.

If for some reason we can't do that, if the BSA doesn't get signed, I think it will be a huge disaster for Afghanistan and that region and our interests. So I hope we can get there.

I very much appreciate your leadership and the leadership of—frankly, of all who have been involved in this, gosh, over 12-, 13-year conflict now. After that amount of time, after the sacrifices that so many have made, I think it is absolutely critical that we get it right as we complete that transition.

I look forward to your testimony explaining to us how we can best do that and how we can support you in that effort.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 43.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General, you have provided your recommendation for U.S. troops to the President. As long as you have come this far, we ought to hear your testimony before I jump into questions. Excuse me, General. The time is yours.

STATEMENT OF GEN JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, USMC, COMMANDER, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND ASSISTANCE FORCE AND U.S. FORCES-AFGHANISTAN

General DUNFORD. Thank you, Chairman.

Good morning, Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee.

I do appreciate the opportunity to testify this morning and to represent the men and women of the United States Forces-Afghanistan [USFOR-A]. Their courage, commitment, and their performance are a direct reflection of your support, and I am confident that no force has ever been better trained and equipped.

We are now in the final year of the combat mission in Afghanistan, a mission to deny safe haven to Al Qaeda terrorists who attacked our Nation on 9/11. We recognize that our vital national interests are best served by a stable, secure, unified Afghanistan from which terrorism cannot emanate.

We have accomplished much in pursuit of those ends. Since 9/11, forces have placed extraordinary pressure on Al Qaeda and extremist networks in Afghanistan. Today, as a result of those efforts, Al Qaeda terrorists are focused on survival rather than on planning attacks against the West.

Since 9/11, and with increased emphasis beginning in 2009, we have focused on developing Afghan National Security Forces. Today, as a result of those efforts, capable and confident Afghan forces are securing the Afghan people and the gains that we have made over the past decade.

Since 9/11, we have worked to improve the daily lives of the Afghan people. Today, as a result of those efforts, Afghans have increased access to clean water, electricity, new roads, and education.

But more important than any sign of progress in Afghanistan, the Afghan people have something today they didn't have in 2001. They have hope for the future.

We have paid the price for those achievements; 1,796 Americans and thousands more Afghans and members of the coalition have made the ultimate sacrifice. We vow to give their sacrifice meaning and to never forget them or their families.

Some people have questioned our progress and pointed out that the overall security situation in Afghanistan didn't really change from 2012 to 2013. That is true.

And when put into perspective, it is also extraordinary because security remained roughly the same with Afghans leading and with over 50 percent of the coalition redeploying.

After watching Afghan forces respond to a variety of challenges since they took the lead in June, I don't believe that the Taliban insurgency represents an existential threat to them or the government of Afghanistan.

I am also confident that they can secure the upcoming presidential election and the nation's first democratic transfer of power. Yet, to make our progress enduring, work remains to build the long-term sustainability of the Afghan forces.

Although the Afghans require less support in conducting security operations, they still need assistance in maturing the systems, the processes, and the institutions necessary to support a modern national army and police force.

They also need continued support in addressing capability gaps in aviation, intelligence, and special operations. To address these gaps, a train, advise, and assist mission will be necessary after this year to further develop Afghan self-sustainability.

A continued counterterrorism mission will also be needed to ensure Al Qaeda remains focused on survival and not on regeneration. Without continued counterterrorism pressure, an emboldened Al Qaeda will not only begin to physically reconstitute, but they will also exploit their perceived victory to boost recruitment, fundraising, and morale.

In closing, I think it is fair to ask if we are winning in Afghanistan. And I believe the answer is yes. And several facts allow me to say that with confidence.

First and foremost, our efforts in Afghanistan have pressured the terrorist network and have, in fact, prevented another 9/11.

Second, we have built Afghan security forces that, with increasingly reduced levels of support, are capable of providing security and denying terrorists safe haven.

Third, we are providing a stabilizing influence in a region that is providing the time and space for a wide range of complex issues to be addressed.

And, finally, as a result of our efforts, the Afghan people face a decade of opportunity within which they can determine their own future free of the brutality and the intolerance of the Taliban. Despite all the skepticism surrounding our mission, that looks like winning to me.

Thank you again for the opportunity.

And, Chairman, I look forward to the questions.

[The prepared statement of General Dunford can be found in the Appendix on page 46.]

The CHAIRMAN. General, you have provided your recommendation for U.S. troops to the President for the post-2014 mission set, which includes the training, advising, and the things that you just talked about, assisting the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] in their counterterrorism and force protection.

At what level of residual U.S. troop presence would you be unable to conduct the train, advise, and assist mission down to the core level of the ANSF?

General DUNFORD. Chairman, last year, in February, the defense ministers met in Brussels and identified a mission with a range of forces from 8,000 to 12,000. That was just NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] trainers. A number over and above that would be part of the counterterrorism mission.

I am comfortable that, within that range of numbers, we can effectively conduct train, advise, assist at the core level and get after that issue of self-sustainability that I mentioned in my opening remarks.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Should the counterterrorism component of the post-2014 mission include going after the Haqqani Network in addition to Al Qaeda?

General DUNFORD. Chairman, my assessment is that the focus of a counterterrorism mission post-2014 would be Al Qaeda. But in order to maintain viability of the force, we clearly need to protect the force—and viability of our bases, we need to protect the force.

In that context, my assessment is that going after Haqqani would be necessary because that will be the greatest threat to the force in a post-2015 environment and, in my assessment, will remain the most virulent strain of the insurgency.

The CHAIRMAN. And should the ANSF be maintained at its 352,000 surge capacity beyond 2014? And, if so, how long?

General DUNFORD. Chairman, right now my assessment is that at least through 2018 it ought to be maintained at 352,000.

That is based on analysis done—independent analysis done by the Center of Naval Analysis, directed by Congress. It is based on studies done by the Center of Army Analysis that for the last 2 or 3 years has worked with us to determine the right size of the force. And it is based on also our own assessment.

And if I could just come back to the Haqqani Network question, the important thing is for the committee to realize that today we are not conducting any unilateral operations in Afghanistan.

All the operations are being led by Afghan forces, with the exception of our own force protection operations, sustainment, and redeployment operations. So when I talk about 2015 and the need to go after the Haqqani and other organizations, my assessment is that would be by and large done by, with, and through Afghan forces.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, how would you assess at this point the strength of the Taliban and the broader insurgency?

As has been mentioned, since we have drawn down and the Afghans have taken over responsibility, there has not been a significant uptick in violence. Most of the confrontations that have come have been successful for the Afghans.

There is some speculation that the Taliban are choosing not to do a full-scale confrontation because they are waiting, basically, for us to leave, and there is a whole lot of speculation around this.

What is your assessment at this point both of the current strength of the insurgency and how that is likely to adjust once we get to the end of 2014, regardless, frankly, of—you know, let's assume we keep the 8,000 to 12,000, but we have drawn down significantly as a result of that. Where do you see the insurgency going now and then?

General DUNFORD. Thanks, Congressman.

I think the best thing to do is to go back and take a look at what the Taliban has tried to do over the past several months and what they have been able to do, in answering that question.

Last spring they came out with their campaign objectives for the summer of 2013. They intended to crush the spirit and will of the Afghan forces. They intended to seize various district centers in order to make a statement of their dominance over the Afghan security forces.

They intended to create a perception of insecurity across the country and to disrupt the political process that began with the announcement of candidates in the fall. And I would summarize last summer by saying that they were unsuccessful in doing that.

This fall they clearly made an effort to disrupt the Loya Jirga, where thousands of people came to Kabul to meet to discuss the bilateral security agreement. We knew from intelligence that there were a number of very, very capable threat streams that had intention to disrupt that event.

They were unsuccessful in doing that because the Afghan security forces were able to secure the event and, also, to disrupt the enemy with activity surrounding the Kabul area.

Similarly, last week there was a Ghazni Islamic festival. Six thousand people from throughout the region came to Afghanistan. The enemy had an intention to disrupt that event. They were unsuccessful once again because of the Afghan security forces.

Physically, I believe today the Afghan security forces have what I would describe as tactical overmatch against the Taliban. What the Taliban have left remaining are some psychological factors, and not the least of which is the one you mentioned, Congressman, which is they expect us to leave at the end of 2014. And from my perspective, they draw strength from that.

In the rank-and-file fighters today, that is the message they have received from the Taliban leadership, is that this summer is very important, the coalition is leaving, the Afghans won't have the support of the coalition this year, they will be gone by the end of 2015. And I think they draw strength from that.

My sense is that, if a BSA is signed, an enduring presence decision is made, we keep our commitments to Chicago and Tokyo, which will resource Afghanistan post-2014, the final remaining

thing the Taliban have today, which is those psychological factors in their favor, they won't have those anymore.

Mr. SMITH. And one of the big issues for me is the support that the Afghans are going to have as we draw down, once we get down to that 8,000, 12,000 level.

In particular, you know, in all of these fights, the close air support that we can provide is enormously important, and the Afghan people, the Afghan military, just—they don't have hardly any of that type of close air support.

Once we get to the end of 2014, is it anticipated that we are going to be able to continue to have some C-17s, helicopters, some of our own equipment there that will be able to provide that close air support?

Because I know that the Afghans—they have got like four attack helicopters in the entire country right now and some others and their jet fighters are not going to be online until 2017, 2018, something like that.

How do you see—number one, how critical is the air support issue going forward? And, number two, how do you envision that being provided for the Afghan forces 2015 and beyond?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thanks.

The Afghans, as you pointed out, they won't have their fixed-wing capability until 2015. We actually this year will begin to deliver the A-29, which is going to be their attack aircraft. There will be 20 of those delivered. And we will complete delivery of those in 2015. But the full aviation enterprise won't be integrated for some time after that.

Mr. SMITH. Training the pilots and basically—

General DUNFORD. Training the pilots and the logistics enterprise.

What is important is that we also have worked very hard to deliver a very capable artillery force to the Afghans, mortars as well as a mobile strike vehicle. All of those are intended to provide fire support for the Afghans to compensate for a lack of close air support.

Whether or not we will provide close air support in 2015 is a policy decision. That decision has not been made yet by the President.

The assessment is that we will do all we can to make sure the Afghans can survive on their own, keeping in mind the Taliban also don't have any aviation support.

And, frankly, the Afghans have an extraordinary asymmetric advantage in the combined arms capability that we have delivered to them over the last couple of years, again, not the least of which is D-30 artillery, the mortars, and the mobile strike vehicle.

Mr. SMITH. Can you give us also—just last question—a quick word on Pakistan, how the relationship is with Pakistan and Afghanistan now, and how—the cross-border traffic, the ability to control, you know, the insurgents as they move back and forth across the Pakistan border. How is that relationship at this point?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, clearly the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan is going to be important for us to achieve our ends.

Over the last year, I have been encouraged by a couple things at the political level. Prime Minister Sharif and President Karzai

have met four times. That is probably unprecedented over the last several years in terms of engagement at that level.

We have also had an effective mil-to-mil relationship, military-to-military relationship, between the Afghans and the Pakistanis that we have tried to facilitate. It has been in fits and starts, frankly, in 2013, for a variety of reasons.

But I met about 6 weeks ago with the new chief of the army staff in Pakistan, General Raheel Sharif. He is committed to improving the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The one thing I think I am most encouraged with is I believe Pakistan recognizes the existential threat that extremism presents to Pakistan; so, they believe today that a stable, secure Afghanistan is in their best interests.

And as you addressed, the border area is important in that regard. And they no more want the TTP, or the Pakistani Taliban, to have safe haven inside of Afghanistan than the Afghans want the Afghan Taliban to have safe haven inside of Pakistan.

I am encouraged right now by the conversation that is focused on two particular areas. First and foremost, the Ministers of Interior have met to discuss the issue of extremism and, also, the broader border management issues that start with the political issues, the economic issues, and the security issues.

So we have good momentum. I wouldn't tell you that we are weeks or months away from a major breakthrough or that we are weeks and months away from a true partnership between the two countries.

But I think we have got to the point where they recognize that it is in their common interests to deal with the threat of extremism and to improve the regime along the border.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, General.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, thank you for being here.

When he was here last week, General Austin said—I think this is pretty close to a direct quote—that, without our presence in Afghanistan, the Afghan Army would fracture.

And I would like to know whether you agree with that. And what are the consequences to Afghanistan and to us if we are not there and the Afghan Army does indeed fracture?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thank you.

My assessment is that, if we are not there after 2014, the Afghan security forces will immediately begin to deteriorate and, largely, that is because of what I mentioned in my opening statement, the systems, the processes, these institutions that allow them to sustain themselves.

Things like spare parts, fuel, oversight of contracts, ammunition distribution, those are the areas that we are focused on working on right now.

When the Afghan security forces begin to deteriorate over time, the Afghan environment as a whole will begin to deteriorate.

And my assessment is that what we will see is, in fact, a fracture in the Army over time and, as importantly, deteriorating security conditions.

And I think the only question after 2014 is the pace of deterioration of both the Afghan security forces and the environment as a whole.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. Well, give me the other side.

If we stay, 8,000 to 12,000, plus counterterrorism, what is your prognosis for the Afghan security forces? And how long would we need to be there to provide that stability for them?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, there is four main areas that I would focus on in terms of capability gaps that will exist after 2014.

The intelligence enterprise is one. The aviation enterprise is another; we spoke about that a minute ago. Their special operations capability, which obviously requires both the aviation enterprise and the intelligence enterprise to be integrated. And then what I have touched on is what I would describe as the capacity of the ministries to actually sustain tactical-level forces.

My assessment is that, with the training mission that is envisioned, we can ensure that the connection is made between the ministerial level and the tactical level so spare parts can, in fact, be acquired and distributed, so fuel can be acquired and distributed, so we can have a pay system that is in place.

So my assessment is that we can do that over the course of a couple years. And, frankly, our presence will change over time. It is largely conditions-based in the sense that there are certain things that I believe we can do in 2015. Our forces would then adjust in 2016 and continue to adjust over time.

But I would also say this, that my assessment is that we have vital national interests in the region and, although the nature of our engagement will change over time and the size of our presence will change over time, I don't see a time when we will walk away from the region.

We will be engaged at some level, even if it is a small presence inside the embassy with an office of security cooperation and perhaps with joint exercises and military exchanges and those things that will allow us to continue to sustain what we have been doing over the past decade, albeit at a much smaller price and a much smaller presence.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. Finally, would you briefly comment on getting stuff out of there. Obviously, it is an enormous job to get equipment and so forth out of Afghanistan. Some things we are turning over to them.

There are reports that we are destroying some things rather than turn it over to the Afghans. Can you just briefly comment on that effort.

General DUNFORD. First, Congressman, I am very confident with where we are with the retrograde as a whole.

And to put that in some perspective, at the height of the surge in 2012, we had about 800 pieces of tactical infrastructure. Those are bases down to patrol bases. Today we have approximately 80. So we have 10 percent of the footprint that we had in 2012.

A little over a year ago we had almost 40,000 vehicles that needed to come back to the services to be reset. We have less than 10,000 that are in place today.

And as I mentioned earlier, we have got about 33,000 forces, American, today, and we had well over a hundred thousand at the beginning of the surge.

So the retrograde and redeployment has gone apace, and I am very confident that we will meet our objectives in 2014.

With regard to equipment that is being destroyed, I can assure the committee that today no equipment that is serviceable is being destroyed.

We do have 4,000 pieces of equipment that have been identified as excess defense articles. So after we have gone to the services and we have said, "What is it that you need to have returned back home to reset the service?"—after they have identified those requirements, there is 4,000 vehicles left, 1,200 of which are MRAPs [Mine-Resistant, Ambush Protected vehicles].

It costs us a little less than \$10,000 to destroy an MRAP. It costs us somewhere between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to actually move that MRAP.

If we wanted to give it to another country, that country would have to accept the MRAPs as is, where is. In other words, they would have to pay for anything to get that vehicle serviceable again and, also, to move that vehicle to their country.

So we are in the process right now, Congressman, of making sure, number one, that the services have revalidated their requirements and we get everything back to the United States that is necessary to reset the force for the next crisis or contingency.

Number two, we are looking at alternatives to provide these vehicles to partners, to include Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other partners that have participated in operations with us right now.

And if we make a decision to destroy some of those vehicles, it will be after carefully thinking through the cost-benefit of bringing those vehicles back to the United States in excess of the original requirement or destroying them in Afghanistan, keeping in mind that these vehicles have already done the primary thing we wanted them to do, which is keep our young men and women alive over the past decade.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Dunford, for being here and for your service, all the hard work in Afghanistan.

I know my colleagues have already mentioned several areas in which we have some question about the ability of the Afghan security forces to sustain and to continue to build.

Certainly the air force is one particular area. Logistics is another, where how comfortable are we that they have enough in place to be able to move forward with that.

But I also wanted to ask about the women in the Afghan security forces. We have put aside some money to direct that effort and to hope that the recruitment and retention of women will continue in the Afghan security forces.

Do you think that, once the U.S. forces are gone, that that will also continue?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, I believe, if we stay and we accomplish the mission that is envisioned for train, advise, assist, we will continue to see progress in that area.

And I could point to an example right now. In the Ministry of Interior, we have 13,000 women that have been selected to be searchers at the polling stations during the elections.

And I recently met with the Minister of Interior as we talked about the challenges that he had in meeting his stated goal of 5,000 women in the Ministry of Interior in the next 2 years and 10,000 by 2017.

And he very quickly pointed out that what he would do is focus on these 13,000 female searchers as a pool from which he could draw additional police.

And I will add that he just recently appointed the first female police chief in Afghanistan and there is a second one under consideration.

The progress has been very slow. We identified some years ago a goal of 10 percent women in the Afghan National Security Forces. We are at less than 1 percent today.

And so the progress is very slow. There is about 1,800 women in the Ministry of Interior and about 600 in the Ministry of Defense.

I believe that the Afghan leadership today, in part because of the support we provided and the \$25 million that you have identified, Congresswoman, that is specifically designed to assist our recruiting and retention efforts—and both of those are equally important.

Not only do we need to incentivize women—and it is very difficult culturally, of course, to incentivize them to join—but we need to then set the conditions to where they are encouraged to stay.

Mrs. DAVIS. May I ask, General, do you see institutional reforms occurring as well along with that, along with the recruitment and the work certainly in terms of some of the women, even minor changes like the building and how they accommodate women?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, that is exactly where some of the money that the Congress has allocated is going. They seem simple, but they are important. Separate changing facilities or separate restroom facilities for Afghan women in a police station. Very difficult if those things aren't available to them.

And so that is where some of the money will go. And, of course, that will make it much more attractive for a woman to pursue a career as a policewoman or a soldier if those kind of facilities are available. And I do see, again, small, incremental, and slow, but change, nonetheless.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

I wonder if you could clarify just quickly the timeline for getting the BSA signed. And I believe you made a statement that you are comfortable if that occurs after the election. There is also a chance that the results may not be known or a new president in place until even September or after that.

What is our—do we have some not necessarily drop-dead dates? But how do you see that? And can we continue with the agreement that is in place today?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, first I would say I want the BSA to be signed immediately. And it goes beyond the planning for a military retrograde and redeployment.

First of all, it affects confidence of the Afghan people. It affects the confidence of the Afghan National Security Forces. I think it affects hedging behavior in the region, as they are uncertain as to what Afghanistan will look like in 2015.

I am also concerned about holding the coalition together over months of uncertainty, and I think that is very, very important. I was encouraged by my recent meeting in Brussels in that regard, but holding the coalition together.

The other factor—and these are all interdependent variables that reflect the BSA—is the retrograde and redeployment.

I am most comfortable with the delay in signing the BSA in our ability to maintain options for the President over the next several months, and I feel like we won't approach an area of high risk until September. In other words, I can maintain all options that the President may want to select from through the summer.

As you get towards September, you enter a period of high risk simply because of how much work has to be done to redeploy the force and how many days you have left to do it, which is why that is a period of high risk.

But we can sign the BSA with the next president. My assumption is that we will sign the BSA with the next president, largely because all the primary candidates have said they will sign the BSA and because of the overwhelming support for the BSA that we see inside of Afghanistan.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And, General, thank you for your service, your leadership.

And I would like to read a statement and then ask you a question. This is from an article called "Money Pit: The Monstrous Failure of US Aid to Afghanistan."

I realize that is not your area of responsibility; so, I want to make that clear to start with.

The article says: Nonmilitary funds Washington has appropriated since 2002 is approximately \$100 billion, more than the United States ever spent to rebuild a country. That estimate came out in July. Since then, Congress has appropriated another \$16.5 billion for reconstruction. And all of that has not bought the United States or Afghans a single sustainable institution or program.

This is an article that came out this week in the "New York Times." It says "Warlords with Dark Past Battle in Afghan Election."

General Dunford, again, you and your staff and your marines and soldiers and everyone else in uniform have done a magnificent job.

But as Ms. Davis was talking about the election coming in April and then results not known until September, the Afghan security forces—I think, in the 12 years we have been there, every general

that has been here or every admiral has always said we are making progress, but it is slow and it is fragile.

I look at and listened to my chairman recently talking about all the cuts that are coming to the Department of Defense. I have listened to Secretary Hagel, who I have great respect for, as well as the chairman, talking about the cuts that are coming. And we know we will be faced with this in the April, May, June, July time-frame, I am sure.

At what point—do you ever have one-on-one conversations with the President of the United States about Afghanistan?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I have discussed Afghanistan with the President a few times over the past year.

Mr. JONES. Okay. May I ask just how recent? And I am not going to ask any details, but just how recent.

General DUNFORD. I was in the Oval Office with the President at the beginning of February.

Mr. JONES. Okay. February.

Well, if, by chance—and I know you have the knowledge because of who you are and intelligence and relationships that you have in Afghanistan—if an unfriendly leader is elected, more unfriendly than Karzai, who maybe has a similar background to Karzai, which is very questionable at best—he has soaked the American people for millions and millions of dollars, maybe billions by now, and we continue to give them money—would you believe that there would come a time that we need to be very careful with future commitments if the person elected to lead Afghanistan is less trustworthy than Karzai?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I believe our presence after 2014 is inextricably linked to our ability to have a partnership with the new government of Afghanistan, and that partnership has to be able to facilitate our counterterrorism goals and it also has to be able to support the progress that we have made to date with regard to the Afghan security forces.

And I would just point out that, of the three leading candidates, all three have indicated strong support for a continued U.S. presence, strong support for continued coalition presence, and a recognition that that presence is necessary to move Afghanistan forward.

Mr. JONES. General, I know at one time—and I think we, as a government—you had nothing do with it; the military had nothing do with it—I think we felt that Karzai was going to be our friend, too.

I don't question your statement at all, sir. I have too much respect for you, and you have more knowledge than I do. But I think, again, the American people are tired. The financial problems facing our country are probably more complex and enormous than we have ever had.

And I hope that the leadership of the Congress, as well as the leadership in the military, will be, as you have been, sir—be honest and frank with the American people, because they are tired of seeing their money and seeing the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan, and, yet, the military has done a magnificent job.

My time is up. Thank you for allowing me to make these statements to you, and thank you for your responses.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to yield my time to Mr. Veasey of Texas. I would like to yield my time to Mr. Veasey.

The CHAIRMAN. To?

Mr. LARSEN. Mr. Veasey.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Veasey is recognized for the remainder of Mr. Larsen's 5 minutes.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dunford, I wanted to ask you how long it will take to get all the elements of the Afghan National Security Forces up to the level where they can conduct their missions themselves.

And let me give you an example of what I am talking about. The Afghan Air Force lags well behind the other elements of the force. And I wanted to know, for instance, how long will our Air Force be required to have assistance in the form of a U.S. presence?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thanks.

Our current plan has the air force—the work that we are doing with the Afghan Air Force being complete in 2017. But I would quickly point out that today we have 58 Mi-17s that are flying in full support of the Afghan forces. We have 20 light—what are called C-208s, light aircraft that can be used for everything from CASEVAC [casualty evacuation] to moving troops. We have four attack helicopters. And we have delivered two C-130s.

And so, while the air force will be complete in 2017, it is very much operational right now. In fact, a special operations capability that the Afghan Air Force has today in the form of the Special Mission Wing is flying profiles that are as mature and as complex as those that I saw as a captain in the 1980s. And so, while we will be finished in 2017, the Afghan Air Force is very much capable today.

No decision has been made as to whether or not our aviation capability would be available to the Afghans after 2015, which is why we are working so hard on making sure that those aircraft platforms that we just spoke about are fully integrated, and, also, that, from a fire support perspective, they have alternatives, to include their artillery, their mobile strike vehicles, mortars, and other combined arms capability that will allow them to compensate for a lack of close air support.

Mr. VEASEY. So it is your opinion that, although we are going to be helping them until, what—that 2017 date I think is what you stated a second ago—that it is realistic to think that they can take over all the required functions by themselves by, like—do you think they are ready now?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, the biggest—it is not a problem delivering an airplane and it is not a problem creating a pilot. We are working through those.

And we—in the United States, we have a ratio of 1.5 pilots to aircraft, and we will have that established in Afghanistan in 2015.

The real difficulty is creating the aviation enterprise that sustains airplanes. It is the maintainers. It is the logistics system and so forth. And so my assessment is that we will be working on that for a couple more years.

Even as the Afghans independently fly missions and support the Afghan Army, we will be helping them develop the logistics enterprise that will allow them to be self-sustaining in the future.

Mr. VEASEY. I also wanted to ask you about the train, advise, and assist mission post-2014. And how much risk do you see in that particular mission if we have a force of about 10,000 people?

General DUNFORD. I would assess, if we are able to provide train, advise, assist at the core level—and that NATO mission of 8,000 to 12,000 would allow us to do that—that the risk is moderate, and that is moderate risk to both the force and to the mission.

Mr. VEASEY. Is there something else that you think that we could do to reduce that risk and to move it out of the moderate level?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I don't. In Afghanistan in 2015, just like today, it will be a combat environment. And I can't imagine that it would ever get better than moderate risk in a combat environment with all of the other interdependent variables that are going to affect our progress in Afghanistan.

Mr. VEASEY. Are there any particular areas where you would like to see an enhanced effort?

General DUNFORD. At this time, Congressman, I am comfortable with the range of options that have been provided to the President. And we are, of course, waiting for a decision.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, thank you very much for your service. I know firsthand the faith that the service members have in your service. My youngest son just returned from being an engineer serving under your command in Afghanistan last year.

My wife and I just felt very confident knowing of your leadership. And it has turned out to be a very extraordinary experience for my son, who has now returned to his civilian employment. But thank you very much.

Also, the people of South Carolina have a bond with the people of Afghanistan. We were really grateful that the 218th Brigade that I had served in for 25 years—that they served out of Camp Phoenix, across the country, working with the security forces under the leadership of General Bob Livingston, who is now our adjutant general.

He has identified that, working with the Afghan security forces, it was a bonding together with Afghan brothers to provide security for the people of Afghanistan.

I am very appreciative. Chairman McKeon has raised this, and that is that the people of Afghanistan are appreciative and support the efforts by our forces, NATO forces, and—nearly 70 percent, as identified by the chairman. Additionally, there was the vote by the Loya Jirga indicating a continuation of support.

What is your view of the feelings of the Afghan people toward the American and NATO forces?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, in addition to what you just mentioned—and that is the polling data that is somewhere between 65 and 80 percent—and that includes Afghan media polling data

that support the BSA and support a continued presence—what I have seen in my time in Afghanistan is overwhelming appreciation and recognition for the contribution and the sacrifice of Americans and the coalition as a whole. And I think the Loya Jirga speaks to that.

But I would probably just share with you one anecdote. Two weeks ago Monday, I met with nine members of the Afghan Parliament, and they were the oversight committees for the Afghan security forces. I told them I was coming back to testify, and I said, “What message should I carry back with me?”

And the message they asked me to carry back was to say that, first, “Don’t let one man speak for Afghanistan or the Afghan people. The Afghan people recognize and appreciate, again, the sacrifice that you have made. Please let them know that, as much as we appreciate it, we also recognize that that commitment needs to continue in the future in order for us to realize the objectives that we set out together some years ago, and those objectives include both the protection of the United States and the advancement of the Afghan people.”

So I have no doubt that the vast majority of the Afghans, you know, upwards of 80 percent, fully support our presence right now, and, as importantly, again, recognize what we have done over the last few years for them and their people.

Mr. WILSON. And that is a tribute to our military, their service.

And, also, USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development]. I visited there 12 times. It has always been impressive to me to see the clasped hands of the U.S. flag and Afghan flag. And I noticed that the signs are rusty, which means they have been there for a while. If the people didn’t want it, it would be easy to take it down. I took that as a real sign of appreciation.

Our President has been correct. There is such an interconnection of the threat by the Taliban to Afghanistan, but, also, to the people and government of Pakistan, and it has been ever-changing.

But what is the latest in regard to Pakistani efforts in fighting terrorism and resisting terrorism in their country?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thanks.

And it is critical that we develop an effective relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. From a military campaign perspective, one of the objectives that we have and one of the elements that I describe as what winning looks like is to establish a constructive military-to-military relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan so that their efforts in dealing with the dynamic of extremism in the region are complementary.

We have made progress over the past year. I am more optimistic as I look at the next several months than when I look backwards. And part of that is because, again, of the commitment that we have from the new chief of the army staff, the commitment from the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, his efforts to reach out to his counterpart in Afghanistan and to the Afghan people and, frankly, some of the initiatives that have even taken place over the last few weeks, to include, as I might have mentioned a minute ago, the Minister of Interior from Afghanistan meeting with his counterpart in Pakistan to work on a border management framework that addresses not only the security challenges that confront both coun-

tries, but, also, the political and economic aspects of their shared border area.

Mr. WILSON. Well, it certainly would be to the mutual advantage of the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan and, truly, the world. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Bordallo.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

General Dunford, thank you for your outstanding service to our Nation and your steadfast leadership in a dynamic theater and for your testimony today.

I guess my question would be more or less to enhance what my colleague from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson, has asked you.

I am interested in your perspective on what role that Asian partners, particularly India, can play over the next 5 and 10 years in Afghanistan. Would this be helpful or harmful to long-term U.S. efforts?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, I think India's role in Afghanistan is critical. India is a very close partner to Afghanistan and, I think, from an economic perspective and from a trade perspective, probably their most important partner in the region right now.

They are not providing lethal aid to Afghanistan as a result of dynamics in the region. They certainly—Pakistan would certainly be concerned with that. But I think India can play a very important role diplomatically and economically in particular and, in fact, they are doing that.

They have a very close relationship with the Afghan people. And even with the Afghan security forces, they have assisted in the sense of providing some nonlethal support—helicopters and parts—and some training that will help our efforts to grow Afghan security forces.

So I think India is a very important partner in that regard.

Ms. BORDALLO. So would it be helpful or harmful to our long-term U.S. efforts? What would be the answer to that?

General DUNFORD. No. Thanks, Congresswoman. It would be very helpful.

Ms. BORDALLO. Very good.

My next question is: From your viewpoint, what still remains to be done in terms of reconstruction? What steps could we in Congress take to ensure that those dollars are used effectively? And are there any partnership programs or tools that have been particularly effective that we need to continue or enhance?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, at this point, with regard to reconstruction—and I will talk just to the DOD [Department of Defense] mission and the Afghan National Security Forces—we are very close to completing the program of record, the plan that was laid out some years ago for the infrastructure necessary to support the Afghan forces.

We will actually have 32 projects remaining in 2015. Those are a combination of Afghan police projects and Afghan Army projects. We will be in a position to provide proper oversight for the majority of those projects, and we will use the plan that we are working

with the State Department to use Afghans to provide oversight for the balance of those programs.

So in terms of oversight, I think we are in a position where we can share with you the entire program of record. We can tell you where we are today. We can tell you where we are going to be through 2016. And, again, as I mentioned, it is really—as a portion of the program as a whole, a very small percentage of the program is remaining to be completed.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you.

And one last question. This has to do with the election April 5.

There has been some talk that the present administration may want to continue on. Do you hear that or is that just something that is—I am sure he would want to play an important role with whoever is being elected. But is there still that talk going on, that he may try to seek another term?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, what President Karzai has said publicly is that he believes that political transition is an important part of his legacy.

And all that I have seen over the last few months in terms of preparations for elections on the 5th of April, the legislation that was passed, the registration process that took place, the physical distribution of ballot materials and all those kinds of things, indicate to me that we will have elections on the 5th of April. And that also includes the security planning that is taking place in support of those elections.

So I feel very confident that we will have elections on the 5th of April, you know, just some few weeks from now.

Ms. BORDALLO. But he does expect to play some kind of a role in the coming election?

General DUNFORD. Well, I think President Karzai is still a relatively young man and an important political figure in Afghanistan and would want to maintain influence in Afghanistan after his term of office is expired. I think that is probably fair.

And certainly things that we have seen and hear him say would indicate that is the case. But I don't see anything that would indicate that elections won't be conducted and there won't be another president.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, General, for your answers. And I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dunford, every time we have had a hearing on Afghanistan I have tried to raise the issue of the narcotics trade.

I think so many times it is pushed aside in importance and its effects on Afghanistan both in instability of the country and the government, corruption, funding of insurgencies, stunting the growth of a real economic base by providing an alternative economy, and certainly supporting significant criminal activity also within the country itself.

Now, there has been a long discussion of how we address the issue of the drug trade. If you look historically at the production of, you know, poppies in Afghanistan, you see that the historical level of poppy production was actually doubled after we went into

the country and then there has been times where we have been able to have an impact, have a dip in the overall level of production, and times, of course, where it has surged.

Some of the strategies we have used is to go after the labs, the fields, the cash, the transportation routes, demands, the leaders, and looking for alternative crops. But still we struggle with the level of narcotics being at a very high rate.

Could you give us an update as to where we stand. Do you see it remaining as a concern? And then, also, I would like to discuss—have you discuss the issue of what happens if the United States withdraws. Are the Afghans able to continue the efforts that we have? And what do we need to do better?

Thank you, General.

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I think you captured it.

I mean, it would be hard to look at where we are today with the narcotics problem in Afghanistan and say that what we have done has worked.

Our focus, on a military perspective, has been to go after where there is a nexus between the insurgency and narcotics. We focused on that to try to disrupt insurgent financing.

But in terms of the broader problem of narcotics, it has increased over time. It is larger today than it was a few years ago, and I do think that there is a need to address that challenge. Otherwise, it will have an adverse impact on the future of Afghanistan and the region and those nations that suffer from the plight of narcotics being distributed in their countries.

And while, you know, a large part of that makes its way to Europe and Russia and lesser it makes its way to the United States, I have certainly also taken note from a distance—but I have taken note of the increased heroin challenge here in the United States.

So, clearly, the narcotics issue in Afghanistan is one that ought to be addressed, but our progress to date has not been very good. It has not been, again, a part of the military mission except where there is a nexus between the insurgency and narcotics.

Mr. TURNER. Well, I am very concerned about that. Perhaps you can give us some additional insight as to what you think needs to be done, recognizing what you just said is that you have not been given the clear assignment.

You have to, however, you know, be waving the flag of a need to address the issue through the, you know, structures that you have in front of you with counternarcotics operations. You know, you are here to tell us what you need and what needs to be done.

What do you see or what would your recommendation be? What don't you have? What needs to happen? You gave a compelling statement of this goes right to the heart of, you know, one of the issues that you have concerns about. What should we do?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, where I have seen progress—and I didn't mention this—is growing the capacity of the Afghan counternarcotics forces. And so we have had some great work done by the DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration], which we have supported over time.

The Special Mission Wing has been established, in part, with some narcotics funding to go after distribution and so forth. And

those have all been good, and I think we need to continue to do those things.

I don't personally have an easy solution for dealing with the narcotics challenge in Afghanistan. I don't think it is just a U.S. problem. I think this has to be certainly maybe some U.S. leadership.

But that is a broader issue that the region needs to grip and deal with. And certainly those countries like Russia that suffer the most from the narcotics problem also have to be part of the solution.

But I don't see a military solution to the narcotics problem in Afghanistan right now, and I don't see a solution that the United States can either, in large part or in whole, support. I think this has to be something that is done by, again, primarily the countries in the region and those that suffer the most from narcotics.

Mr. TURNER. General, I would just ask that you move this item up the list of problems that are identified that you are facing in Afghanistan.

Even if you don't have the solution, you are shackled with the problem, and I think so many times when we receive presentations on Afghanistan this is a portion of the problem that is not highlighted sufficiently.

So I would appreciate both your efforts and, you know, others to continue to raise this so that we can address it, because I don't think you will ever or we will ever or the Afghans will ever have success in Afghanistan until this issue is addressed.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, General Dunford, for being here.

I have been a Member of Congress now for a little over 6 years, and as a Member, I have made about five trips to Afghanistan, like so many on this committee who feel how important it is that we do go there. And in our last trip, we were so fortunate to meet with you, and I thank you for meeting with us.

It was part of a mothers delegation on behalf of Mother's Day. And we go with a dual track, really, of getting an update on the situation on the ground, but also, we have a unique opportunity and do seek out ways in which we can connect with Afghan women to see how their lives have changed as a result of our presence there.

And in every instance, we really meet remarkable women. We have met cadets at the country's military academy, we have met staff members at the U.S. embassy in Kabul, we have met university students, we have met government officials, we have met community leaders. So it is clear that as a result of all of our presence there, we have created a more open society and that women are more fully participating in many meaningful ways in their country's life.

And I think I always come away thinking how important it is. We take pride in these gains. I think we should rightfully take pride in these gains, but we all know how fragile they are, like so many other things in their country. And I hear always a really deep concern from the women we meet with as to what will happen

as our presence, as we draw down. They are so grateful for their ability to contribute to their country's life, but deeply concerned.

And I think the upcoming elections are critically important to the future of women's participation in their country's lives. And I think that it is so important that women, Afghan women are fully able to vote and participate in a choice about the future of their country without fearing for their own security.

So I was pleased to read in your written testimony about your confidence in the Afghan National Security Force's ability to support a secure election. And the biannual 1230 report mentions that there are approximately 22,000 polling centers and stations in Afghanistan for use during the April election, but that in November, the ANSF had only 2,000 women members, which you referenced, to assist with security operation during the elections.

So can you outline—and you also mentioned an additional 13,000 people that have been recruited. So can you talk about what we are doing to make sure that all these polling stations and centers are places in which women can go to vote.

The report also said, you know, what is at stake here. Quote, "failure to recruit more women could deter female voter turnout, harming the legitimacy of those elected to office in 2014." So it is about a number of things, but in particular, the legitimacy of the government going forward, and if women are not able to participate in a meaningful way, that will really be drawn into question.

General DUNFORD. Thank you, Congresswoman. And we consider successful elections, the words we use are "inclusive," "transparent," and "credible," and the inclusive part is the one you are obviously addressing, the one that we mostly focus on from security perspective.

You mentioned the 20,000 polling centers; about 40 percent of those will be women only. So that is one way that we will be able to see an opportunity for women to vote. Those 13,000 female searchers will allow women to vote at the polling stations and the polling centers. There's 6,775 polling centers across the country; there will be access women at those centers. But what you really talked about are the stations. Those are the places in some of the smaller areas and so forth, and, again, 40 percent of those will have access as a result of these 13,000 women that have been trained now to be female searchers and really be there to make sure that the polling centers are accessible to women.

Ms. TSONGAS. Do you feel you have the support of the Karzai government in this? Is this something we are having to take on? What is your sense of that?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, you will be glad to know that we did not have anything to do with the 13,000 female searchers. This was a program that we certainly supported and our Congress supported, but the Minister of Interior is the one that has responsibility for the elections. He is the individual that set up the program to train the female searchers and to make sure they were properly distributed, and he worked with the Independent Elections Commission to make sure that the polling centers were available to women in that 40 percent, I mentioned to you that were women only would be there for inclusive election.

So I very much see this as an Afghan-owned election. We have certainly provided some logistic support, but in terms of accessibility to women, I think that has very much been an initiative by the governor of Afghanistan, and I think there is a recognition by the governor of Afghanistan that to look back on these elections and say they were successful will in part be determined by the inclusivity to include women's participation.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, General. My time is up.

Mr. THORNBERRY [presiding]. Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dunford, thank you so much for joining us today. Thank you for your service to our Nation. How would you characterize the ANSF's ability to maintain infrastructure and equipment currently, and what their capacity may be in the future? We all know that there is some question about their mentality in maintaining what we have given them and how they would use it in the future.

Obviously, as far as sustainability for the operations, we would like to see them pursue to maintain security in the nation. How do you see that now? What do you think might need to be improved with that?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thank you for that question. You know, I think it is fair to say that over the last couple years we really focused on the quantity of the Afghan forces. We doubled the size of the Afghan forces just since 2009 alone. And along the way, there was some challenges with the quality of the force, one of which is the one you are talking about.

But you mentioned the mentality, that has not been a part of the logistics challenges from my perspective of the Afghan forces. In fact, when you come over in the next couple of weeks, you know, you will have an opportunity perhaps to see some young Afghans. And given the parts and the opportunity, they can fix anything. And so I am very impressed with what goes on at the lower tactical level in terms of their desire to fix their equipment and their ability to fix their equipment.

What we really have a shortfall on is the planning, the programming, the budgeting, the acquisition of materials that eventually allow a part to be delivered down into a motor pool where a young mechanic can actually hang that part and get the vehicle back in a high state of readiness.

And so the piece that we need to really fix is, we need to train the mechanics, and I think we have made great progress in that regard over the last couple years and we will continue to focus on that. But most importantly, we need to make sure that the systems and the processes are in place to actually deliver those parts to that young mechanic in a timely manner. And that is really what I think needs to be addressed in the coming months and that is actually our focus.

I mean, it is important to point out, we have shifted from providing combat advising, which we were doing through last year, to do what we call security force assistance based on the functions that need to be addressed for the Afghans to be sustainable.

So our orientation today, our advisors, when they go to work every day, are focused on the things that you are talking about, Congressman, helping fix the logistics system, helping fix the pay

system, helping make sure that the parts are actually delivered to those motor pools.

And we have some work to do, but we also have the buy-in of Afghan leadership. They actually own the problem now. They recognize if they don't fix this problem, they won't be able to make progress. And so we are increasingly in a support role and they are very much leading and fixing this problem.

Mr. WITTMAN. In the context of U.S. presence there, let's look at the scenario if the President decides there will not be a post-2014 presence in Afghanistan. Will we be able to get out our equipment by December 31, 2014, and what kind of lead time would we need in order to accomplish that to make sure that we are getting our equipment out and making sure, too, that we are wrapping up our mission there and especially how we interrelate there with NATO?

General DUNFORD. Thanks, Congressman. If today, I knew that we were going to draw down the force and withdraw all the people and equipment by next December, I wouldn't do much different between now and July. We are stabilizing the force to make sure the Afghans are set up for success in securing the elections and for the summer of 2014.

In July, in August, we will be able to maintain both options: the full regional approach that I spoke about earlier, the NATO train, advise, assist mission, or to withdraw all of our equipment and people by the end of 31 December.

As we get into September, we enter a period of high risk in our ability to actually withdraw all of our people and equipment in an orderly manner by the end of December. And the reason simply is, Congressman, there is about 102 days worth of work to do based on the force size in September of 2014.

So I call it the "physics plus friction equation." The physics of withdrawal will be about 102 days. You obviously want to buffer for bad weather, aircraft maintenance issues, enemy gets a vote. And so as you start getting to less than 120 days, you start entering a period where your risk of an orderly withdrawal starts to increase. And that is the 1st of September.

Mr. WITTMAN. Let me ask in another scenario. If we are able to achieve a post-2014 residual presence, looking at that retrograde mission, does that retrograde mission personnel number count against the boots on the ground [BOG] cap?

General DUNFORD. In 2014, Congressman, we have a number of individuals called the CENTCOM [Central Command] Material Reduction Element that support us in our retrograde redeployment efforts, and those numbers don't count. So when I talk about the 30,000 Americans in Afghanistan, those numbers don't count. Those people come back and forth. And they do a lot of great work for us, but they are not part of the train, advise, assist mission that we have.

My assumption is that all of the forces that are there in 2015 will be accountable, will be part of BOG accountable is, I think, the term that you are looking for.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dunford, your appearance and presentation today represent the best of our military, and you exemplify the professionalism that, you know, is just tremendous. I thank you for your appearance today, and I thank you for your knowledge, your comprehensive knowledge of the affairs of your command.

And I wanted to ask you, a recent worldwide threat assessment by the Director of National Intelligence asserts that an Al Qaeda core probably hopes for a resurgence following the drawdown of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. How are you measuring the strength of the insurgency; and in particular, what can we conclude from considering the current number of insurgent attacks, the sophistication and scale of the attacks, or the kinds of targets the insurgency is choosing?

General DUNFORD. Thanks, Congressman. First, with regard to Al Qaeda today, I believe Al Qaeda today is focused on survival in Afghanistan, and that has been as a result of the constant pressure on the terrorist networks that we have had over the last several years, in particular with our special operations capability.

The second part of your question gets after the insurgency and what kind of targets they are focused on right now. There is no doubt in my mind, and we know this both for our intelligence and from open source, that the insurgency is focused on disrupting the elections in 2014 and focused on crushing the spirit and the will of the Afghan forces in 2014.

Because they believe that we are leaving at the end of 2014, they look at this as a very critical year. And so what we expect to see are high-profile attacks to create the perception of insecurity. What we have seen and expect to continue to see are assassinations against government officials and political leaders and campaign workers and candidates during the election, and then what we expect to see through the summer similarly are high-profile attacks, again, to garner media attention and create that perception of insecurity.

My assessment is that the physical ability of the Afghan security forces is sufficient to secure the country against the insurgency. I don't believe the insurgency is capable of seizing ground, seizing terrain. What they are capable of doing is these, again, high-profile attacks, assassinations, and those kinds of things to create a perception of insecurity.

Mr. JOHNSON. Does the ANSF have the support of the majority of the Afghan people?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thank you for asking that question, because that is a really important point. Since I have been in Afghanistan, of all the changes that have taken place in a little over a year, the most profound changes have been in two areas: One is the sense of accountability and responsibility of Afghan leadership and I have talked about that a little bit; but the second is, the ownership that the Afghan people have for their Afghan security forces.

And I will just give you one example because it is a recent example within the last week. We had an unfortunate incident where 21 young soldiers were killed out in the Kunar province in the northeast part of the country. In the wake of that event, there was an outpouring of support for the Afghan army.

Those soldiers were given a memorial service in Kabul. Thousands of people participated in that. We saw on the Web, on Twitter accounts and so forth, young Afghans voicing support for the Afghan army. And in the polling that has been done, to include the polling done again by Afghan media outlets, about 80 percent of the Afghan people have a positive assessment of their army and their police force.

And so I think of all the developments that we have seen recently, the question you ask really highlights one of the more important developments, again, that sense of ownership that Afghans have, the sense of pride that Afghans have for their security forces, and we are very encouraged by that.

Mr. JOHNSON. Now, that is good to hear. Does that hold true in all regions of Afghanistan or just in the area surrounding the capital or what?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thanks. It is in all areas of Afghanistan, but there are about somewhere between 11 and 15 percent of the people that still support the Taliban. I would say it a different way, 85 percent of the people don't support the Taliban, but clearly there are some people who don't support the Afghan army and it is a very small percentage of the population. They are largely in the south and east. But the dynamic that I described earlier in terms of the sense of ownership and a sense of pride in the army is certainly something that cuts across all of the regions.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, sir. And I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, two questions kind of rolled up into one here. One, you talked about successes. Can you talk about significant successes, recent significant successes? And two, talk about NATO for a minute, if you would, and just kind of how the NATO coalition, what they are doing and what they are bringing to the table still and kind of how you view them?

General DUNFORD. Thanks, Congressman. With regard to successes, particularly with the Afghan forces, I probably pointed to, the first was Loya Jirga that took place in November—3,000 participants. The city was completely secured, locked down physically by the Afghan security forces. There were probably 8 or 10 very high-profile threat or streams that we were tracking every day that the Afghans were able to disrupt.

In the weeks leading up to the Loya Jirga, they were able to make sure that the enemy's efforts, and they were very concerted efforts, to disrupt the Loya Jirga were unsuccessful. And that event was conducted without a single security incident. Very encouraging. And what is most encouraging is that effort was led by Afghans, the integration of Afghan security forces was done by Afghans and we had very minimal support.

Just 2 weeks ago there was an Islamic festival in Ghazni. Once again, a lot of intelligence and a lot of chatter, a lot of threats against that event. Expected 6,000 people to come to that event, many from throughout the region, international leaders from throughout the region. Once again, the Afghan forces developed a plan, implemented that plan, and that event was conducted without a security incident.

And I would also point to the registration process as a prelude to the elections that took place during the summer and during the fall, which was successful and puts us in a position of being able to be successful on the 5th of April during the actual conducting the elections themselves.

Just over the last couple months, I guess the last one I would mention, if you just look in the southern part of the country, the 205th Corps is down there in the south, in Kandahar, one of the more difficult areas, of course. And they have conducted a series of operations into the enemy support area to completely disrupt and dislocate the enemy over the last couple of weeks.

And during the winter months historically, the Afghan security forces have conducted about 10 operations a month. Over the last 2 months, their average is about 20 to 25 operations per month. Again, integrated combined arms operations planned and led by the Afghan security forces with a minimal amount of support from the coalition, that is all something that even a year ago I couldn't have imagined any of those examples taking place without a much greater role by coalition forces.

With regard to NATO itself, in the fall, Congressman, when we were looking towards a defense ministerial that just took force in February, we were all concerned that if we didn't have a decision in February, the coalition might begin to unravel. I did attend, with Secretary Hagel, a defense ministerial in a smaller session of just the 28 primary members of NATO. Secretary Hagel shared the conversation that took place between President Karzai and President Obama and talked about the need to plan for alternatives at this point.

And I would tell you that all 28 ministers that sat around that table said we recognize the need to plan for other eventualities, but we want you to know we are committed to a post-2014 mission; we plan to stay the course; we recognize how important it is. And so from a coalition-cohesion perspective, I was very encouraged.

Italy, Germany, and Turkey, in particular, are framework nations. Our mission in 2015 is envisioned as the Italians taking responsibility for the west, the Germans in the north, the Turks in the center, and then the United States would be in the east and the south. And those three countries, in particular, have stayed strong and indicated a strong interest in participating in a post-2014 mission and worked very hard to make sure they had the political will in their respective capitals to be able to do that.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you. One last question. I talked to Secretary Hagel about 2 weeks ago about Bowe Bergdahl, because the State Department had their lines; a lot of different agencies were doing different things; DOD had their take on how to get him back; and it sounded like it was all kind of disorganized.

I know now that Mike Lumpkin, ASD SO/LIC [Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict] is the point man for DOD. So my question is, you don't have total control over that but you have somewhere in your command structure, you have a part of it. What is your part? What is your take on it? How are you tied into it? And who do you see as the lead now on getting Bowe back?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, first of all, the force is very aware of Bowe Bergdahl and committed to making sure he is going to come home, and we are going to continue to do everything we can until he absolutely comes home. We have some special operations capability in Afghanistan. Depending on where Bowe Bergdahl may be, what intelligence we get, we would certainly be prepared to conduct operations as directed, if we were to get actionable intelligence.

Mr. Lumpkin, as you mentioned, is the OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] coordinator. If anything has to happen in Afghanistan, that would certainly fall within U.S. Forces-Afghanistan and the special operations capability that we have there. And we are certainly prepared to do that.

We have a detailed plan. I wouldn't want to talk about it here, but we have a detailed plan that addresses everything from Bowe Bergdahl's recovery to the medical support he may need and the onward movement back to the United States in the event that we are able to get Bowe Bergdahl back. And so we are prepared and wouldn't waste a nanosecond were we to get an opportunity to return him to his parents.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I might just mention that Mr. Lumpkin will be with us in the IETC [Intelligence, Emerging Threats and Capabilities] Subcommittee in open and closed session this afternoon, so we may pursue this further.

Mr. Barber.

Mr. BARBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And General, thank you for your leadership and service over a long time to our country. And I want to also, through you, convey my appreciation and the whole committee for the men and women who serve under you, the incredible job they are doing in Afghanistan.

We have a large number of men and women in uniform from my district who are serving under you in Afghanistan right now. They are members of the Army from Fort Huachuca and members of the Air Force from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, and some of those service men and women are from the 355th Fighter Wing at Davis-Monthan in Tucson.

As you know, General, these are very skilled pilots. They have provided close air support, forward control, and combat search and rescue for our troops on the ground, and have been very successful in fighting the enemy at close range. And as you also know, I am sure, General, this platform is able to land in austere airfields including dirt runways without harm to the engines, and other platforms with engines that close to the ground cannot do this. They just suck up dirt like vacuums.

And as you know, General, President Obama's budget proposal would divest the A-10 fleet to reduce costs at DOD. And I am wondering, General, if you could comment in your experience on the role that the A-10 and their pilots have played in supporting our ground troops in Afghanistan against the Taliban compared to other close air support platforms.

General DUNFORD. Thanks, Congressman. And I don't think there is any question, and I know you have had a number of witnesses that have been here and said the same thing. In the current environment, you know, there has not been a substitute for the A-10, it has been an extraordinary platform. It has supported our men and women on the ground to a great degree, and I also had experience with it in Iraq as well, so I am a big fan of the A-10.

More importantly, I am a big fan of the capability that the A-10 represents, and so I know there is a discussion about divestiture. I certainly am not part of that. My job is to identify the requirements and the capabilities that are needed to support the force and then the chief of staff of the Air Force provides those capabilities, and I know that they are working through those issues right now.

Mr. BARBER. Well, let me just follow up on that, because earlier, Ranking Member Smith raised a question, I think it is a very valid question that you answered, I think, very frankly, and that has to do with the residual force, if we have one, which we hope we do. Because I agree with you, General, that if we don't keep up force in Afghanistan we are going to lose so much of what we have invested in human casualties, lives lost, and treasure.

I would like to come back to that question of a post-BSA. I hope we have one. If we finalize the BSA, and hopefully we do it soon, would you be recommending to the President that we maintain the capability to provide close air support to the remaining forces, the Afghan forces and our residual force?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, first, we will absolutely have close air support in support of our force. And at this point, you know, again, we provided the President with a range of options about 2014. And until he makes a decision, I would prefer to keep my recommendations private as best military advice to the President. But I will tell you absolutely that with regard to close air support, we will not have a post-2014 presence without being fully supported and that will include aviation capability.

Mr. BARBER. And could you say that that would be best delivered by A-10s as it has been up to now?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, you know, I will identify the capability and, again, I will look to the Air Force to meet that capability.

Mr. BARBER. Very good. Well, we all know the Warthog works. And when I speak to our Army men and women who come back to Fort Huachuca, they tell the stories about their deployment, of course, but they say that the best day that they have is when the Warthog is overhead and they know they are going to be safe and then search and rescue, of course, is well supported.

Again, General, I really thank you for what you have done in Afghanistan. I do hope that we can get this BSA signed soon. What we put into Afghanistan cannot be squandered by not having a continued presence at whatever level is appropriate and that you recommend to the President. Thank you, again, for coming today.

General DUNFORD. Thanks, Congressman.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Nugent.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I start, I just want to make a comment in reference to our friends in the Senate

as relates to Ukraine, and actually diverting funds that are destined to our military to help the Ukrainians out. I think it is just a dumb idea that we would cut any additional money from our services, particularly when we are still at war, and the challenges that we face.

But General, I truly do appreciate, you lead the men and women who are the tip of the spear, those that are engaged in combat today. I have had sons that have served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and so I certainly do appreciate your leadership. But I have to tell you this, that I am concerned, you know, obviously the American people are concerned about continued engagement in Afghanistan.

You know, I will be honest with you; I fluctuate back and forth about whether we should stay there and risk, it's not just dollars but risk, you know, the blood and lives of American citizens in support of the Afghanis. It reminds me back when I was at a movie with my wife and we watched "Charlie Wilson's War."

And the amazing thing is, our older son was in combat in Afghanistan for 15 months when we were watching that screening. And we said, geez, if we had only done something different back then, maybe our son wouldn't be in Afghanistan today fighting a fight across the shores.

So, you know, that is why I am somewhat conflicted, because people back home say, you know, we just need to get away, just get out of Afghanistan and not risk any more of our service members' lives.

I hear your testimony and I have been to Afghanistan and you see some of the progress, but I am concerned about whether it is sustainable and how much money we have to put in play. But secondly, I was in Iraq and I had two sons in Iraq at the time during the drawdown. And one of the nights that we were in Iraq, there was an IRAM [Improvised Rocket-Assisted Munition] attack against U.S. forces and a number of our soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division were killed.

I also know that troops identified where the bad guys were putting their heads at night and they were not allowed to go and either capture or kill those that were responsible because of the relationship that we had with the Iraqis; they blocked us from going to protect our own.

Do you see any parallels that we could see that again in Afghanistan, or are we going to ensure that our troopers and marines that are there continue to have the ability to protect themselves and go out and find and destroy, not just dependent upon Afghanis to do that, but do we have the ability or will we have the ability?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thanks for that question. Along with Ambassador Cunningham, the ambassador to Kabul, I sat through 12 weeks of the BSA negotiations, and my primary focus was, of course, to ensure that the bilateral security agreement had the authorities inherent in that agreement to allow us to properly protect the force which includes both force protection measures of the kind you describe as well as the inherent right of self-defense.

And I am confident that that bilateral security agreement has the authorities in it to provide proper protection. I would never, ever make a recommendation for us to deploy young men and

women in harm's way without their ability to protect themselves, again, not only the inherent right of self-defense but also to take force protection measures that are appropriate in a combat environment.

My assessment is that 2015 in Afghanistan will be a combat environment, and my strongest recommendation is that we will have the authorities necessary to properly protect the force. And, again, my role as one of the negotiators with the BSA was to ensure that those authorities were, in fact, in place. So I can give you confidence in that regard, Congressman.

Mr. NUGENT. And General, that to me, as a Blue Star parent, I still have sons that are serving, that means a lot to us. For me, to support us, you know, continuing on in Afghanistan, I want to make sure, you know, not just the immediate self-defense, we all understand that, but the ability to go out, like you say, to project force if we know where the bad guys are that are actually attacking our troops. I want to make sure that for me to support that I would need to have the assurances that we have the ability or not only the ability but the willingness to do that. And I appreciate your comments. I really do.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Thank you, General.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, General Dunford. I was very happy to read in your prepared remarks that you devoted a section to stewardship of resources. It is always important to address the importance of being good keepers of taxpayer dollars, but it is ever more important in these times of constrained resources.

You also acknowledge instances of inefficiencies and waste in Afghanistan, which is a huge concern for me going forward as our withdrawal intensifies. In your prepared statement, you mentioned developing a five-step process to increase the checks and balances to improve planning, execution, and oversight of resources.

I admire the work of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction [SIGAR], and while they are independent, I would like to hear more about your involvement in coordination with their efforts, and a little bit more about your five-step process and what it entails.

General DUNFORD. Thanks, Congresswoman. And first, with regard to the special investigator as well as all the other audit agencies, we have 15 people in U.S. Forces-Afghanistan that their specific role is to facilitate the audits and the investigations that take place. And I think we had some 100 of them last year. And I think the prolific nature of the SIGAR reports is probably the best indicator of the support they have received, because all of the information and all the access they have is reliant on our cooperation at U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.

And I am certainly most interested with audits and investigations and what they can tell me that will allow me to avoid making mistakes in the future. And while I think it is important to gather lessons learned, what I am mostly concerned about today as a commander is what am I doing today and what am I going to be doing

tomorrow that might not be the best use of our resources, and so how do we do it?

With regard to the processes that we put in place, maybe I will just give you one example that will bring a process, you know, probably to life. We, a couple years ago, built a program of record for Afghan security forces, and at the time there were certain assumptions made about the infrastructure that would be required to support the coalition forces at the time.

And assumptions were made about the size of the force. For example, you would be surprised to hear that one of the assumptions is that there might still be 100,000 Americans in Afghanistan in 2015. And so some of the infrastructure that was not made available to the Afghans was later not going to be necessary for the force.

We went back through this year, starting in May, and we reviewed the entire Afghan program of record through this process that I just described. And in the course of that, we found a number of projects adding up to \$800 million just since May, \$800 million of projects that we could cancel or descope because there was other infrastructure available, you know, that the coalition was not going to be using in 2015.

And while that sounds like a fairly simple thing to do, those are the kind of activities, especially now at the end of the campaign, those are the kind of activities we are doing every day where every single project goes through, you know, a very comprehensive process to make sure that, one, we have proper oversight; two, it is absolutely needed; and three, it is within our means in terms of the projected resources that we will have available; those being the three most important criteria that we look at as we go through this process.

So, Congresswoman, I am actually pretty proud of the team of folks that I have over there that are working through this. They have come up with a lot of creative ways to make sure that we are good stewards. We realize that we are in the 21st century and the power of the narrative is all-important, and we also know that the narrative of us being good stewards is important to the mission, it is important to the Congress, it is important to the American people.

And we have worked very hard over the past year to make sure that we had a powerful narrative of good stewardship. And again, I think although sometimes investigators and those being investigated, there is often inherent friction in that relationship that you understand, at the end of the day, you can't argue with the results in terms of the numbers of investigations that have taken place in the areas that we have identified where we can be more efficient in the expenditure of our resources.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Well, one of the things that the special inspector general had said and was very complimentary to the military effort is looking at contractor fraud or contractors who need to be disenfranchised from the process, and that information is shared between the different military activities that are going on. But there were real concerns with as the military drawdown occurs, if that information will be passed on to other U.S. agencies, such as State Department, USAID, who they found were actually still con-

tracting with folks who has been disenfranchised under the military procurement system.

What work are you doing there to sort of transfer that information over to our sister agencies?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, we meet with the U.S. Embassy and USAID on a biweekly basis, so our folks are completely integrated. All the information and intelligence that we have concerning contractors is passed to the embassy in real-time, and that will continue in the future. I have a liaison still at the embassy. I actually have a brigadier general in the embassy with a staff of about eleven. And their job is to make sure that we have absolute transparency between the U.S. mission, military mission as well as our U.S. Embassy.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Mr. Byrne.

Mr. BYRNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And General, thank you for your patience in sitting here today. We appreciate your service. I have been in Congress about 3 months now. I have got to tell you, before I came here, I was one of those people that said it is just time to get out. I was on the campaign trail. I heard that from a lot of my constituents.

But since I have been here and served on this committee, I have been persuaded that I was wrong about that and that the sort of proposal that you have made about our ability to stay on the limited basis that you have proposed, if we can get the BSA, is a better way to go.

Nonetheless, I still talk to people from my district who are serving, or have served over there, your boots on the ground. And when I talk to them, they think we should get out; that they are pessimistic about what our future can be there. And they base that on a couple things: One is, they don't think we are wanted there, and they don't see progress from their service.

Now, they don't get to see everything you see. So I was hoping you could help me out and tell me what you would say to them so that I know what to say to them as I take the position that I am taking on their behalf.

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thanks. And I will try to very quickly tell you what I say to the troops as I am talking to them. First of all, in 2002, we established the very first battalion, or kandak, of the Afghan army, 600 soldiers. So the first 600 soldiers were in 2002. We had less than half the number of Afghan security forces that we have today as recently as 2009.

The first time I made a visit to Afghanistan was at the Helmand Province in 2008. At the time, the ratio of coalition forces to Afghan security forces was 10–1. Today the ratio is 10–1, Afghans to members of the coalition. You know, we have got about 45,000 in the coalition and 370,000, so it is closer to 10–1 than certainly the 1–10 that we had.

More importantly, even over the last several months, the Afghan forces have assumed responsibility for security. So we are no longer conducting operations. It is the Afghans that are conducting secu-

rity for the Afghan people on a day-to-day basis, and increasingly, they are able to do things without our support.

So if you go for—and I do have concerns about this. If you go for a 7-month deployment or a 12-month deployment, sometimes the change is imperceptible. But if you had the opportunity like I had to visit Afghanistan over the years and see us go from a ratio of 10 members in the coalition to 1 Afghan soldier to the exact opposite ratio and increasingly decreasing the coalition, and by the way, the security environment, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, hasn't changed since 2012 until today, and in that time we have gone from over 100,000 forces, members of the coalition to about 33,000 Americans and 45,000 members of the coalition.

The other thing that may be harder for our folks to measure is what I talked about earlier, and that is the human factors. And, you know, when I first saw the Afghan security forces, I remember seeing a young lieutenant who was pleading and cajoling with his Afghan counterpart to go out on patrol without much success.

Today what we see is a sense of pride, a sense of aggression, and frankly most of the time the Afghans are telling us, look, if they don't need our support, they are telling us to back off, they have got it. And we see that more than not in terms of where the Afghans are.

So the greatest thing I have seen today is that the Afghan security forces really feel the ownership for security in the country, Afghan leaders are the ones that when there is a problem, identify it with logistics; when there is a problem, identify it with leadership; when troops aren't getting paid, Congressman, it is not my problem anymore. It is the Afghan leadership's problem.

Now, they may come to me to help with the solution, but they own the problem. And I wish that the young men and women that have deployed over the years actually had the opportunity to see our progress over time as opposed to, you know, the limited period of time that they serve in Afghanistan where it may be very difficult to see.

And with regard to the Afghans wanting us to leave, that is not a bad thing. We want to leave; they want us to leave. It is not a natural thing for us to be there in the numbers that we are in right now. But as much as they want us to leave, because they want to assume responsibility fully on their own, they also recognize that there is a few capability gaps that have to be addressed before we go.

So I think there is a recognition right now, a professional recognition that what we are doing is necessary, and frankly, I don't think it is a bad thing to consider our presence in Afghanistan at the size we have today to be a necessary evil to meet both our interests and Afghans' interests knowing that that presence will be reduced over time.

Mr. BYRNE. Thank you, General.

I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Gallego.

Mr. GALLEGO. The last one. Thank you, General. I also want to thank you for your service, but also for taking the time to teach so many of us the intricacies of Afghanistan, especially on our visits over there, that is very meaningful to so many of us.

I represent 136th of the population of Texas, but nearly a quarter of it by land. And if you are looking at that map from San Antonio to El Paso, a lot of, I am going to call them kids, who either serve now or have served in uniform and have served in Afghanistan, and I meet with veterans; the one thing that ties us all together, big or small town, is the large community of veterans.

And recently, in meeting with some veterans, there is, and I will be diplomatic in the term that I use, I will say there is some disappointment with the U.S. and the exit from Iraq, because there are a lot of those veterans who feel like they sacrificed so much and saw their colleagues and comrades in arms sacrifice so much. And at the end of the day there was not much left to show for it.

Your testimony here has been fairly optimistic, so what would you say to those veterans about why Afghanistan is different, and why it is that we should be optimistic about the idea that we will draw down and draw out completely?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thanks. As I said to the force several times, one of the most important responsibilities I feel and all of us that are serving in Afghanistan feel right now, at the end of this mission, at the end of 2014, we need to look at the families that have fallen and we need to look at our counterparts that returned home much different than when they deployed and tell them that what they did was worthwhile. That is very important to us.

And so I have described what we are doing today as, what does winning look like at the end of 2014? And what I would say to your constituents is, particularly those that played a role in Afghanistan, what winning looks like is effecting security transition and letting the Afghan forces stand on their own so that they can provide security in Afghanistan and, by the way, be effective partners in the war against terrorism that has threatened our country. So that is the first component.

The second component is to assist and support political transition, and we are doing that and I anticipate we will see political transition here in the remaining part of the year. And the third real component is the broader, regional piece that I have talked about a couple times this morning and focusing specifically on Pakistan and the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and we are working very hard to facilitate a good bilateral relationship between those two countries.

But the first two components are the ones that I believe at the end of 2014, particularly if we stay the course with a post-2014 mission, we will be able to look at those who have sacrificed over the past 12 years and say what we came up to do was establish a stable, secure, unified Afghanistan with effective and capable Afghan security forces. And we are doing that. And you can see the evidence of it every day in terms of increased numbers of Afghan forces that are providing security and reduced numbers of coalition forces.

And I think the elections in 2014 are going to be a watershed event. We will have given the people of Afghanistan the opportunity to determine their own future, and I think being a part of that, as you know from your constituents that were part of Afghanistan and Iraq, that matters to us. We appreciate, I think, and

value democracy as much as anybody, and to be a part of that development in Afghanistan, I think, is also important.

So in my mind, at the end of the year, you know, people don't use the term "winning," Congressman. When I talk to 18-, 19-, 22-year-old young men and women that are risking it all to perform a mission, I think talking in terms of what winning looks like is important. And I can identify those three components, and all of them, all of them are achievable in 2014, and all of them can be secured with a fairly small presence post-2014.

Mr. GALLEGO. I will tell you, General, as a parent of a very young son who is 9, I don't see how some parents, you know, sleep with their kids over there. And so I thank you very much for doing all that you can to make sure that all of our sons and daughters over there are safe and for doing a phenomenal job at taking care of them. Thank you for that.

General DUNFORD. Thanks, Congressman.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, General.

In some ways, it seems to me, we saved the most important questions and answers until the end, and I appreciate that very much. I know it is always hard for you to get away, but I think it was important for the committee and the country to hear your straight-up assessment of where things stand these days in Afghanistan. Thank you for taking the time to come.

And Afghanistan may not be in the news as much as it once was, but that, in many ways, is a good thing. And due to the professionalism and commitment of you and the people who serve with you. So thank you. Please pass along our gratitude to them as was just expressed, and with that, the hearing stands adjourned.

General DUNFORD. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:49 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MARCH 13, 2014

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

MARCH 13, 2014

Opening Statement of Chairman Howard P. “Buck” McKeon

HEARING ON

Recent Developments in Afghanistan

March 13, 2014

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The committee meets to receive testimony on recent developments in Afghanistan. Joining us today is General Joseph Dunford, the commander of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. forces in Afghanistan. This committee knows that your mission in Afghanistan is at a critical juncture, so thank you for being here. And thank you for your superb leadership.

Today, approximately 34,000 U.S. troops and approximately 19,000 international troops from 49 nations continue to work as part of an international coalition to help Afghanistan continue its transition to self-governance and become a secure and stable nation.

Yet, as we convene this hearing, the future of our commitment to Afghanistan is uncertain. President Karzai is undermining his own people’s security. He refuses to sign the bilateral security agreement (BSA). Last month, he broke an international commitment by releasing 65 terrorists held in Afghan custody— all of whom are associated with groups who have killed both U.S. troops and Afghan civilians, including the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and the Haqqani Network. Last week, we learned President Karzai was disbanding the security force that currently provides static security at U.S. bases and logistics convoys in Afghanistan. Afghans and Americans alike should be outraged by these tactics.

But we need not pin our hopes on one man, especially one who will no longer be President in a few months. The Afghan people continue to be amazing allies. The Loya Jirga supported the BSA and said that it should be signed immediately. Polls show that 70 percent of Afghans want us to stay. There’s also an election coming up, and many of the presidential candidates publicly support the BSA with the United States.

Afghanistan and the region are extremely complex; nonetheless, the United States military continues to execute their mission with skill. And we continue to

have vital national security interests in the region. We must ensure that Al Qaeda cannot use Afghanistan as a launching pad to attack the United States. This requires a national commitment to see the mission through. That starts with the President.

I recently gave a speech about Afghanistan and I noted that counterinsurgencies have two fronts —the one out there, and the one right here. Our troops have held their line out there. The President must hold the line here. By rarely discussing what's at stake in Afghanistan and allowing public support for the war to erode, the President has lost political capital that could have been used to solve a number of problems.

On the other hand, I believe a safe and secure Afghanistan is within our grasp. The biggest uncertainties we face in Afghanistan are no longer military. The President has sustained international support for this new democracy. He went out and obtained international commitments for billions in aid to help lift them out of despair. He kept the coalition of countries willing to send troops to fight with us. And as a direct result of his military strategy, Afghanistan is freer and America is safer. For that I congratulate him.

General Dunford, I hope you can help remind the American people, and our political decision-makers in Washington, what is at stake. I expect that you will provide this committee, as you do with the President, your best military judgment on the post-2014 mission set and associated presence necessary to continue fighting terrorist threats and to sustain a secure environment for the Afghan people. I look forward to your testimony.

Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith
HEARING ON
Recent Developments in Afghanistan
March 13, 2014

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I would like to thank General Dunford for appearing here today. We truly appreciate your years of service. I hope you will also convey our thanks to those brave men and women serving under your command in Afghanistan.

We have made significant progress in achieving our goal in Afghanistan to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat Al Qaeda and to prevent its return to Afghanistan. The death of Osama bin Laden and the decimation of Al Qaeda's senior leadership over the last few years at the hands of our brave men and women of our military and intelligence services have made America safer. On the ground in Afghanistan, our military, with our ISAF and Afghan partners, has done tremendous work, particularly over the last couple of years, to push the Taliban out of the south and southwest of Afghanistan and to vastly increase the capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Those forces are now conducting 95% of all conventional operations and the vast majority of all special operations. The progress made to date has gone a long way to better position the Afghan government, and the Afghan people, for success.

That is not to say that the road has not, especially recently, been difficult. I am certain that many here today will express a great deal of frustration with the current government in Afghanistan. President Karzai's refusal to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) despite the endorsement of every major leader in Afghanistan; his release of dangerous detainees in violation of an agreement with us; and the continuous and unfair criticism of the actions of ISAF forces and the motives of the United States have driven many members, including me, to new levels of frustration with our partner in this fight. But frustrated as we might be, we are in Afghanistan, assisting the Afghans to fight the Taliban and rebuild a stable and secure Afghanistan, for the benefit of our national security interests, not on behalf of President Karzai.

We should not underestimate the challenges we and the Afghan people face as we attempt to secure those interests. Afghanistan is, and will be for some time to come, a poor country, with a largely uneducated population, plagued by groups that use violence to achieve their goals, and with a government that is often both incompetent and corrupt. In the immediate future, the Afghan people are facing a presidential election and the first real transfer of power since the Taliban were removed from power; the drawdown of ISAF forces and likely increase in Taliban attacks; and economic challenges that will almost certainly accompany that drawdown.

Fortunately, our mission is not to build a perfect Afghanistan, but solely to help build an Afghanistan that is capable of denying the Taliban and their Al Qaeda allies a safe place to operate. In the short term, that means providing the Afghans with assistance for their elections. It means helping as we can to ensure that the transition of power is as smooth as possible. Hopefully, that new president will sign the BSA to provide a stable, legal basis for the future presence of our troops and our NATO partners in Afghanistan so that those troops can help the Afghan people in their pursuit of a stable, secure Afghanistan.

Let me be clear—I support a limited, residual United States military presence in Afghanistan after December 31, 2014, to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces and conduct counter-terrorism missions against Al Qaeda and other potential threats as necessary. I believe such a presence, limited in size initially and declining over time, to be the best way to secure our national security interests in that region. It is also the best way to oversee the provision of assistance that the Afghans will certainly require if the ANSF is to remain a viable force and the country is to not descend once again into civil war.

General Dunford, I am hoping that you can help us flesh this out a little. Assuming the BSA is signed or we continue to keep troops in Afghanistan under the existing agreement and we can figure out a way ahead for our ISAF and NATO allies, what do the Afghans need to do to secure their country, prevent the return of the Taliban, and ensure that Afghanistan cannot become a safe haven for terrorism? What assistance do they require from the United States to build that security going forward? What part of that assistance would be provided by the

Department of Defense, and specifically by the U.S. and international troops comprising a residual presence? How big or small would that residual force have to be to carry out that assistance, conduct counter terrorism missions, provide for force protection, and finish the retrograde of U.S. equipment? What are the trade-offs when we consider the geographic scope of such a presence? How long do you think we would have to maintain such a presence and what force levels and mission sets would be required over time?

If, due to intransigence by the Karzai regime, such a presence becomes impossible, we will need to rethink our approach, but our interests in the region will not change and will have to be pursued through other means. General Dunford, I hope you can help us think that through as well. Our primary mission in that region is completing the elimination of core Al Qaeda, so what would we have to do to finish that job? What are the risks to Afghanistan, to the region, and to our security interests if we cannot maintain a residual force in Afghanistan and how can we compensate for that?

General Dunford, again, thank you for appearing here today. Together with the Afghan people and Afghan security forces, our brave men and women in uniform have made great strides in Afghanistan over the years, and we are nearly done. I hope you can help us think through how we finish this job as soon and effectively as we can, so we can bring to a close our war in Afghanistan and bring our brave servicemen and women home.

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD
COMMANDER
U.S. FORCES AFGHANISTAN
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN
AFGHANISTAN
13 MARCH 2014

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Afghanistan: What We've Achieved

I. Where We Are – State of the Campaign

In the final year of the military campaign, U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) and our coalition partners have not forgotten the objective that brought us to Afghanistan more than 12 years ago: to prevent the country from once again becoming a safe haven for al Qaeda and international terrorism. Since 2001, our presence in Afghanistan and the extraordinary efforts of both conventional and special operations forces have prevented another 9/11. Today, USFOR-A forces continue to place constant pressure on terrorist networks. Concurrently, troops from the 49-nation International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) continue to develop credible and capable Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) – forces that can secure Afghanistan in the long term and prevent the re-emergence of safe havens from which al Qaeda can launch attacks against the U.S. and her allies.

Last June, coalition forces achieved a major milestone in the military campaign when the ANSF took the lead for security operations nationwide. Progress was further made when the ANSF emerged from the 2013 fighting season as a confident force capable of securing the Afghan people. With the ANSF in the lead, ISAF forces transitioned to a support role and began a train, advise, and assist mission initially focused on further maturing ANSF combat capability. Currently, ISAF advisors are re-orienting their focus away from developing combat skills to now developing the capabilities and institutions needed for the ANSF's long-term sustainability.

The nine remaining months of the ISAF campaign will have a decisive impact on Afghanistan's future. We will be focused on supporting the ANSF as they prepare for the fighting season, political transition, and security transition in December, when they will assume full responsibility for Afghanistan's security. ISAF will also continue to posture the force in preparation for NATO's post-2014 Resolute Support train, advise, and assist mission that will address gaps in capabilities that are necessary for the ANSF to become self-sustainable.

II. Where We Are – State of the ANSF

Today, Afghanistan is being secured by a confident ANSF with limited coalition support. The only unilateral operations ISAF is conducting are for our own force protection, sustainment, and redeployment. As a result of the ANSF's new lead role and the coalition's new support role,

our Afghan partners are bearing the brunt of enemy attacks, although their cohesion remains strong. American and coalition casualties have significantly dropped, with casualties in 2013 being nearly a quarter of what they were in 2010.

The transition to Afghan forces leading security operations in the summer of 2013 was a marked change in the campaign, which had coalition forces leading combat operations for the previous 12 years. Despite ISAF's early recognition that Afghanistan's security would depend on indigenous forces and coalition efforts beginning in 2002 to build an Afghan security force, progress was slow. In 2009, enabled by the U.S. troops surge ordered by President Obama, the coalition made a conscious effort to first grow ANSF numbers (quantity) and get them into the fight. This was then followed by an effort – which continues today – to develop ANSF enablers and professionalize the ranks (quality). As a result of this plan, the ANSF have grown to a force of nearly 350,000 soldiers, airmen, and police today. These forces are augmented by an additional 26,000 local police forces.

In 2010, coalition and Afghan forces began conducting partnered operations, which developed combat capabilities and leadership skills from the tactical level on up. As a result of the ANSF's progress, President Obama and President Karzai agreed in January 2013 that Afghan forces would take the lead for security nationwide at the Milestone 2013 ceremony on June 18, 2013. As the Afghan forces stepped into the lead role for counterinsurgency operations, ISAF forces stepped back into a support role. This new role had coalition members serving as combat advisors to Afghan units to further develop tactical fighting skills and the integration of combined arms, such as artillery, mortars, and attack helicopters.

2013 Fighting Season

In their first fighting season in the lead, the ANSF proved capable of securing the Afghan people, fighting their own battles, and holding the gains achieved by ISAF over the last decade. Like the coalition forces who led operations the year prior, the ANSF successfully maintained control of all key terrain and populated areas. Today, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) remains in control of its 34 provincial capitals and all of its major cities. The majority of violence continues to take place away from populated areas, and polling shows the vast majority of Afghans hold a favorable view of their soldiers and police.

The ANSF consistently demonstrated tactical overmatch against the Taliban-led insurgency, and proved resilient in a tough fight. They independently planned, led and executed

combined-arms operations. They improved cooperation across the Ministry of Interior (police), the Ministry of Defense (army), and the National Directorate of Security (intelligence service). And they generated an impressive operational tempo as they secured the Afghan people.

The ANSF's improving capabilities were demonstrated in large and complex combat operations across the country. In July, the ANSF launched *Operation Semorgh* in eastern Afghanistan. It was the largest Afghan air assault in history, followed by a two-pronged attack into the Azrah Valley. The three-week operation – which involved the Afghan air force, the 201st and 203rd Army Corps, the 111th Capital Division, special operations, and police – began with Mi-35 attack helicopters escorting Mi-17s helicopters as they inserted 250 Afghan soldiers and 13,000 pounds of supplies. Afghan helicopters provided fire support and casualty evacuation while Afghan artillery and mortars provided surface fires in support of the ground force's movement through difficult, mountainous terrain. Despite insurgent attacks, bad weather, and the soldiers' fasting for Ramazan, the ANSF successfully cleared the valley of insurgents and secured the district center, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid and voter registration materials. Once the operation was complete, Afghan police remained in the valley to provide for its long-term security. The ANSF independently planned, executed, and sustained the operation; ISAF only provided enabler support, such as close air support, casualty evacuation, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

Throughout the rest of the summer and winter, each of the six Afghan Army corps planned and executed multiple complex operations throughout the country with the support of the Afghan air force, special operations, and police. Highlights include the 205th Corps' *Operation Chamtoo* in southern Afghanistan, where they cleared almost three hundred villages in 14 days with minimal casualties; in the process, they discovered and confiscated 1.5 tons of homemade explosives and more than 1,000 IEDs and components. The 207th Corps's *Operation Abu Nasr Farahi* in western Afghanistan cleared insurgents along Highway 1, protecting the Afghan people and securing a vital road for commercial and military needs. The 209th Corps' *Operation Hindukush* in northern Afghanistan cleared insurgent safe havens in the Warduj Valley. And the 215th Corps' *Operation Oqab* in southwestern Afghanistan took the fight to insurgents in Sangin, demonstrating strong combined arms capabilities during clearing operations to deny insurgents safe haven.

The ANSF's growing capability was particularly evident during the Loya Jirga in November, when 3,000 Afghan leaders from around the country met in Kabul to discuss the U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA). Despite concerted efforts from the Haqqani Network and other insurgents to disrupt the Loya Jirga, the ANSF successfully secured the event without incident. This accomplishment was the result of extensive planning and integrated operations in Kabul, other major urban centers, and the key routes connecting them by the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, and the National Directorate of Security for weeks leading up to the event. This performance reflects a degree of coordination between the three different security pillars that simply didn't exist in early 2013.

Despite the ANSF's successes throughout the fighting season, they also faced several challenges. Due to existing capability gaps and shortfalls, the ANSF relied on ISAF for enabler support, particularly in the areas of close air support, casualty evacuation, logistics, counter-IED, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. The ANSF also suffered high casualties and instances of poor leadership, but impressively remained a cohesive and resilient fighting force.

On balance, after watching the ANSF respond to a variety of challenges over the past year, I do not believe the Taliban-led insurgency represents an existential threat to GIRoA or the ANSF. However, while the ANSF's performance shows they require less ISAF assistance in conducting security operations, they do need a great deal of help in developing the systems, the processes, and the institutions necessary to run a modern, professional army and police force.

ANSF Capability Gaps

ISAF forces are in the process of re-orienting from combat advising at the unit level to functionally-based advising at the Afghan security ministries, the six army corps, and the police zones. In this new role, advisors are focusing on tasks that will build the ANSF's long-term sustainability to make the progress that has been made to date enduring.

At the security ministries, advisors are focusing on building ministerial capacity in planning, programming, budgeting, and acquisition. Advisors are also working to improve integration between the different security pillars— army, police, and intelligence service — at all levels. In the fielded force, advisors will focus on capability gaps like the aviation, intelligence, and special operations. They will also focus on developmental shortfalls in areas like logistics, medical, and counter-IED. At all levels, our advisors will work to improve Afghan transparency

and accountability of donor resources, and reduce casualties and overall attrition. In total, our shift to functionally-based advising is putting the ANSF on a path to sustainment.

Despite our advisory efforts in 2014, four capability gaps will remain after the ISAF mission ends. I assess that without the Resolute Support mission, the progress made to date will not be sustainable. A limited number of advisors will be required in 2015 to continue the train, advise, and assist mission. These advisors will address gaps in 1) the aviation enterprise, 2) the intelligence enterprise, 3) special operations, and 4) the security ministries' capacity to conduct tasks such as planning, programming, budgeting, acquisition, and human resource management so they can provide tactical units the support they require to function. These advisors will put the Afghans on the path to sustainment that the Afghans can further develop after Resolute Support concludes.

In summary, although clear challenges exist along the security line of effort, I believe the physical capabilities and capacities of the ANSF will be sufficient to secure the election, to achieve transition in December, and – with a post-2014 advising mission – to provide for Afghanistan's long-term security. These collective efforts are hardening the Afghan state and giving it needed time to develop and mature. These efforts are also reducing the insurgency's operating space and incentivizing its participation in the peace process.

III. Where We Are – State of the Threat

ISAF and Afghan forces remain focused on denying safe haven to al Qaeda and keeping pressure on the extremist network to limit the operational ability of al Qaeda, the Haqqani Network, and other transnational and foreign military groups inside Afghanistan.

Sustained counter-terrorism operations have prevented al Qaeda's use of the country as a platform for terrorism. Operations have restricted their permanent presence to isolated areas of northeastern Afghanistan and have resulted in only a seasonal presence in other parts of the country. These efforts have forced al Qaeda to focus on survival rather than on operations against the West. Counter-terrorism pressure placed on al Qaeda – as well as the elimination of fighters and facilitators – has prevented another attack on the homeland. Yet, continued operations are necessary to prevent al Qaeda from regenerating degraded capabilities.

Challenges remain despite this success, as the extremist network within Afghanistan has become more complex over the last decade. Where at one time al Qaeda could be isolated – as

we intended to do in 2001 – extremist networks have now expanded in the country. Increased cooperation and coordination can be seen between al Qaeda and other extremists like the Haqqani Network, Tahrik-e Taliban Pakistan, and Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The Haqqani Network remains the most virulent strain of the insurgency, the greatest risk to coalition forces, and a critical enabler of al Qaeda. The Haqqani Taliban also shares the Afghan Taliban's goals of expelling coalition forces, removing the Afghan government, and re-establishing an Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. They lead the insurgency in three eastern Afghan provinces (Paktika, Paktiya, Khost) and have demonstrated the capability and intent to launch and support high profile and complex attacks against the coalition across the country. In response to several dangerous threat streams against coalition and Afghan personnel, ANSF and U.S. special operations forces have expanded their security and counter-terrorism operations. These operations have successfully disrupted several dangerous threats streams that sought to inflict significant casualties on the force and break the coalition's will.

The Afghan Taliban also remain a potent and resilient threat. At the beginning of the 2013 fighting season, they outlined their operational objectives: seize and hold district centers, increase violence across the country, conduct insider and high profile attacks to garner media coverage, and crush the will of the ANSF in their first fighting season in the lead.

Despite their continued efforts, the Taliban made very limited progress in achieving these objectives and in exploiting ISAF's reduced troop presence to generate operational or strategic momentum. The Taliban were not able to hold terrain, crush the ANSF's spirit, or increase insider attacks and violence levels from 2012 when coalition forces led security operations. However, the Taliban were able to project violence into urban areas from rural safe havens, threaten freedom of movement along major highways, and contest government control in some areas. They were also able to conduct high profile attacks that negatively influenced Afghan and international community perceptions about security, and capitalize on the existing uncertainty surrounding the coalition's post-2014 mission. Despite these successes, recent polling data shows the Afghan population continues to widely reject the Taliban, challenging their ability to expand influence.

As we look to the remaining months of the ISAF campaign, we can expect the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and other extremists to attempt a higher operational tempo than in previous years to disrupt the political process and prevent the signing of the BSA. They will

seek to increase propaganda, assassinations, and high profile attacks to create a perception of insecurity and weaken coalition cohesion. In response, ISAF will continue to support the ANSF as they continue a high rate of security operations to mitigate these threats.

While insurgent and terrorist threats have proved resilient, ISAF and ANSF operations have kept these groups at bay. Continued pressure will be required to prevent al Qaeda from regenerating degraded operations with the support of groups like the Haqqani Network. Continued pressure will also be required to address the broader extremist network in Afghanistan, which threatens the stability of the nation as well as the broader region. The long-term solution to this challenge remains a capable and sustainable security establishment and responsive institutions of civil governance that together can secure the nation and prevent the re-emergence of al Qaeda safe havens. Continued international support in both of these areas will be essential to GIRoA's long-term capacity to govern and serve as a security partner in the region.

IV. Challenges and Opportunities

Strategic Partnership with GIRoA

Despite political challenges, the fundamental partnership between ISAF and the ANSF remains strong. Coalition and Afghan leaders retain a positive day-to-day relationship and continue to work together in pursuit of shared strategic objectives. Afghan government, civil, and military leaders demonstrate a growing appreciation for the coalition's efforts; these leaders are genuine in their gratitude for our shared sacrifice over the last decade. I have also seen our Afghan partners develop a growing sense of ownership and pride in their army and police force. Over the last year, Afghans have begun to realize that they have credible security forces that can protect them. However, the Afghan people still desire continued and broader international support, as evidenced by the Loya Jirga's endorsement of the BSA and widespread popular sentiment among Afghans for a signed BSA.

Narrative

Uncertainty continues to exist throughout Afghan society and within the ANSF about the U.S.' and the international community's commitment to Afghanistan post-2014. Absent confidence and hope for a brighter future, many Afghans are planning for the worst. Numerous reports cite the depreciation of Afghan currency, plunging real estate prices, capital flight, and

young, well-educated Afghans trying to emigrate. This uncertainty, and a subsequent fear of abandonment, spurs hedging behavior by Afghan power brokers. Uncertainty also spurs hedging by regional actors. These behaviors have a corrosive effect on Afghan confidence and the broader campaign, and they distract attention from issues important to Afghanistan's future, such as good governance and economic development.

The Taliban continue to capitalize on these challenges and leverage the information environment to advance a narrative of coalition abandonment. In fact, the Taliban's failure to achieve their operational intent in 2013 was partially offset by their effectiveness in negatively influencing public perceptions about security and the future. In addition to undermining Afghan confidence and advancing a narrative that they are chasing coalition forces out of Afghanistan, the Taliban ranks continue to gain strength from their belief that all coalition forces will depart Afghanistan at the end of the year.

I believe a signed BSA and NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) will address the Afghan people's concerns and damage the Taliban's confidence. These documents – combined with clarity on the post-2014 mission and associated financial commitments from the Chicago Summit and Tokyo Conference – will significantly enhance Afghan confidence and erode our enemy's will. While the information environment is a challenge today, I believe it can be turned around.

In the meantime, we are working to mitigate the risk that uncertainty poses to the relationship between the ANSF and the coalition. We are communicating our commitment through both actions and words, and are expressing our confidence in the ANSF's ability to secure the election and the Afghan people post-2014. We are also working to ensure they know how proud we are of our relationship – a relationship built on trust and a common vision for a stable, secure, and unified Afghanistan.

Insider Threat

Although insider attacks against ISAF forces in 2013 declined sharply from 2012, they remain a focus area for our force protection. Thus far, these attacks have not significantly affected the strong relationship between coalition and ANSF personnel, particularly in the field where they face a common enemy every day. ISAF is cautiously optimistic that the mitigation measures applied over the previous year are working. These measures have reduced, but not eliminated, the threat. We remain vigilant to prevent future insider attacks.

Attrition

A high attrition rate, particularly in the Afghan National Army, continues to pose challenges to force development. The main causes of attrition are assessed as high operational tempo, sustained risk, soldier care/quality of life, and leave issues. Afghan casualties have also increased since the ANSF took the lead for security last June.

While combat losses comprise a relatively small percentage of ANSF attrition numbers, reducing ANSF casualties remains both a top moral and operational priority for ISAF and ANSF leaders. Several factors in addition to enemy action contributed to casualties in the 2013 fighting season, such as shortfalls in medical care and casualty evacuation. We are aggressively addressing these shortfalls in several ways: the introduction of combat lifesaver skills and medical kits so soldiers can give self aid and buddy aid at the point of injury, the use of Mi-17 helicopters for casualty evacuation, and improved Afghan medical capabilities and long-term care. Reducing casualties also depends on the ANSF's warfighting capability, which ranges from a commander's competency to a unit's ability to integrate combined arms. ANSF leaders are working hard to improve these areas.

Although the overall attrition rate is high, it has not impacted combat readiness, as the ANSF remains sustainable in numerical terms due to robust recruitment. However, if the current attrition rate persists, it could have an adverse effect on the long-term quality of the ANSF. Urgent action is therefore being taken to address the root causes of attrition beyond combat casualties, and to develop a culture of accountable leadership in the ANSF. In particular, ANSF senior leadership has established a Joint Attrition Working Group and an Absent Without Leave Prevention Committee to identify and mitigate its causes.

Af-Pak Military to Military Relationship

Security within Afghanistan and Pakistan remains inter-dependent, and requires a cooperative effort between the two nations. Cooperation is necessary to address the common threat of extremism, mitigate the risk of violence on the Afghan-Pakistani border, and give Afghans and their neighbors confidence in the future. Another challenge involves enemy sanctuary in Pakistan, which is a major factor preventing ISAF's decisive defeat of the Afghan insurgency in the near term. To advance stability, ISAF continues to play a facilitator role in pursuit of a constructive and effective relationship between the Afghan and Pakistani militaries.

In the past year, positive political developments have provided space for the Afghanistan-Pakistan military relationship to grow. These developments include visits between President Karzai and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, their participation in tripartite meetings in London and Ankara, and Pakistan's support to an Afghan-led reconciliation process. As a result, ISAF was able to facilitate trilateral engagements at the senior military level that augmented a growing bilateral relationship at lower levels. However, progress remains fragile. Minor issues – as demonstrated by a border incident in December – can quickly stall gains in the bilateral relationship. However, the absence of publicity and unhelpful rhetoric during the December incident reflects a change to the status quo and signals the potential for continued progress.

Stewardship of Resources

Stewardship of taxpayer dollars is a priority for USFOR-A, and is critical to keeping the trust and confidence of the American people. Yet, war is an inherently inefficient and challenging endeavor, and despite the dedicated efforts of many, cases exist over the years where American resources were not spent as efficiently as possible. USFOR-A takes seriously our obligation to protect taxpayer dollars, and is working hard to ensure both wise spending and the identification of areas for cost savings or avoidance.

In 2013, USFOR-A developed a five-step process to increase checks and balances and improve the planning, execution, and oversight of resources. This process mandates a continuous and rigorous review of all requirements (e.g., Afghan Security Force Funds, Military Construction, Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund, Commander's Emergency Response Program) based on changes in the mission and operating environment. Requirements are scrutinized and subsequently validated, de-obligated, or re-scoped based on input from relevant stakeholders. In fiscal years 2013 and 2014 (to date), these efforts have resulted in cost savings and avoidance of more than \$5 billion. USFOR-A has also welcomed and incorporated into our processes independent agencies' recommendations for improvement, which have proven most helpful when released in time to effect change.

USFOR-A will continue to scrutinize every dollar spent to ensure spending is necessary to mission success and results in the desired effect. This approach applies equally to post-2014 ANSF funding that was committed at the Chicago Summit.

V. **Milestones and Major Events**

Presidential Election

ISAF is decisively engaged in supporting the ANSF as they plan for the security of Afghanistan's presidential election on April 5th. The presidential election will serve as a defining moment in the campaign, as it will usher in the nation's first democratic and peaceful transfer of power. ISAF understands that an election process that is inclusive, transparent and credible will be critical to the long-term partnership between Afghanistan, the U.S., and the international community. Successful political transition will also be critical to meet a precondition for continued donor resources, as outlined in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

To ensure a secure environment that will both encourage and facilitate voter participation, ISAF is supporting the Ministry of Interior, which has lead responsibility for election security, and the Ministry of Defense and the National Directorate of Security, which are in support. ISAF assistance involves planning, logistical and operational support requested by, and in coordination with, GIRA and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). ISAF is also prepared to provide in extremis security support if needed. Throughout the election process, ISAF will remain a neutral player.

To reduce the risk of an election delay, ISAF is currently supporting the movement of election materials throughout the country. While the IEC and ANSF are transporting election materials to 98 percent of election locations (e.g., regional hubs, provincial centers, district centers, and polling centers), the Afghan government has requested limited assistance from ISAF due to security conditions, weather conditions, and the volume of election materials that need to be moved. ISAF assistance includes providing enablers – such as intelligence and air support – to the Afghan forces as they transport materials to 19 locations. ISAF is also directly moving materials to four regional distribution hubs, five provincial centers, and 17 districts. During air and ground movements by ANSF and ISAF forces, election materials have been and will remain under IEC control and custody.

My confidence in the ANSF's ability to secure the election is based on several factors. First, the ANSF have already facilitated a successful, nationwide voter registration process. Their performance during the fighting season and the Loya Jirga also serves as a positive indicator for the election. Second, there will be more forces providing security than during the

2009 election. Then, there were approximately 250,000 coalition and Afghan forces securing the election. In April, there will be approximately 425,000 troops, of which 375,000 will be Afghan. Third, ANSF planning efforts are well ahead of where they were in 2009 and include several rehearsal exercises to prepare for the historic event.

Posturing the Force

As ISAF looks to December, two campaign imperatives guide our actions. First, we are taking steps to reduce risk and ensure a smooth transition to the Resolute Support mission. We are also focused on maintaining simultaneity in the campaign by building ANSF sustainability while providing support to the ANSF as they prepare for the election and the fighting season.

To focus our efforts, ISAF has divided 2014 into three phases with specific outcomes. On March 1st, we completed our first phase. This phase saw us continuing to transition from combat advising to functionally-based advising, and working with the ANSF to disrupt high profile threats. Concurrently, we executed 50 tasks to increase Afghan readiness, such as improving vehicle maintenance and stocking ammunition supplies. These tasks will help the ANSF operate throughout the election and fighting season without taking an operational pause or reaching a point where their operations are disrupted or halted due to lack of logistical support.

In the second phase of 2014, from now to July, we'll complete the transition to functionally-based advising. This will facilitate the arrival of ISAF's final troop rotation in July and will begin what we conceptually view as Phase 0 of Resolute Support. In the third and final phase, from August to December, we'll finish posturing the force to ensure a smooth transition to the post-2014 mission.

ISAF's retrograde and redeployment efforts remain on track or ahead of schedule. U.S. troops in theater number fewer than 34,000 – well below the 100,000 U.S. troops at the height of the surge. By December 31, U.S. forces will be at the post-2014 number decided by President Obama. As forces have redeployed, ISAF has closed, de-scoped, or transferred tactical infrastructure – ranging from large bases to small combat outposts – to the Afghans. Coalition bases and outposts now number less than 90, from a height of more than 850 in 2012. In December, we'll be at our Resolute Support number. In terms of materiel reduction, fewer than 10,000 U.S. vehicles not needed for the post-2014 mission will be returned to the military services. This is down from a high of more than 40,000 vehicles in June 2012. To provide

context, during the summer – and in the middle of the fighting season – we moved 6,000 vehicles.

Post-2014 Mission

In anticipation of a signed BSA and NATO SOFA, ISAF continues to plan for the Resolute Support train, advise, assist mission. This mission will focus on the four capability gaps at the operational/institutional and strategic levels of the ANSF that will remain at the end of the ISAF mission: 1) Afghan security institution capacity, 2) the aviation enterprise, 3) the intelligence enterprise, and 4) special operations. In accordance with NATO guidance, ISAF is planning on a limited regional approach with 8,000 - 12,000 coalition personnel employed in Kabul and the four corners of Afghanistan. Advisors will address capability gaps at the Afghan security ministries, army corps, and police zones, before eventually transitioning to a Kabul-centric approach focused on the Afghan ministries and institutions. Due to delays in the completion of the BSA, and at the recent direction of NATO, we will begin planning for various contingencies in Afghanistan while still continuing to plan for Resolute Support.

VI. What Winning Looks Like

Despite the remaining challenges in the campaign, we remain focused on winning in Afghanistan – as defined below. Its key components include:

- The transition of security responsibility to a confident, self-reliant and sustainable ANSF capable of protecting the population and securing a legitimate Afghan government
- An operationally ineffective al Qaeda deprived of safe haven from which to plan and conduct operations outside the area
- An acceptable political transition following an election viewed as inclusive, transparent, and credible by the Afghan people and the international community; and Afghan government adherence to the Mutual Accountability Framework
- A constructive Afghanistan-Pakistan military to military relationship

On December 31, we will reach the end of the ISAF combat mission. Until then, USFOR-A and ISAF will be focused on maximizing the time left to advance the campaign. While work remains after 2014 – such as building ANSF sustainability– the components of winning can largely be achieved by the end of the year. I am confident in our ability to effect full security transition in December. I am certain that counter-terrorism operations by American

and Afghan forces will continue to deprive al Qaeda of safe haven. I am optimistic that political transition will successfully take place. And I believe we are on track to develop a constructive military to military relationship between the Afghanistan and Pakistan militaries that can be a foundational element in a broader partnership between the two countries. In the remaining months of the campaign, American and coalition personnel will work to achieve these goals.

When the men and women of USFOR-A and ISAF depart Afghanistan this December, they will depart knowing their hard work and sacrifice – and that of those who came before them – have not only built a capable Afghan security force, have not only given the Afghan people the opportunity to determine a future of their own, but have also enhanced our collective security and kept the American people safe. That is what winning will look like.



General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.
Commander, International Security Assistance
Force/United States Forces - Afghanistan

General Dunford assumed command of the International Security Assistance Force and United States Forces-Afghanistan on 10 February 2013. A native of Boston, Massachusetts, he graduated from St. Michael's College and was commissioned in 1977. He previously served as the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps from October 2010 to December 2012.

General Dunford has served as an infantry officer at all levels. He commanded the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, he commanded the 5th Marine Regiment.



Joint assignments include service as the Executive Assistant to the Vice Chairman, JCS and Chief, Global and Multilateral Affairs Division (J5).

As a general officer, he has also served as the Assistant Division Commander, 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Director of Operations, Vice Director for Operations on the Joint Staff, and the Marine Corps Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations. He commanded I Marine Expeditionary Force and served as the Commander, Marine Forces U.S. Central Command.

General Dunford is a graduate of the U. S. Army Ranger School, Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School, and the U. S. Army War College. He holds an M.A. in Government from Georgetown University and an M.A. in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

MARCH 13, 2014

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MCKEON

Mr. MCKEON. We understand that in June 2013 you requested that various Army and DOD officials explore the possibility of replacing the current LOGCAP cost-plus contract with a fixed-price contract. In your letter to the Deputy Secretary of Defense (ATL) as well as the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology) and the Commander, Army Material Command, you cited a smaller and more stable footprint as well as a decade of LOGCAP experience as rationale for considering a fixed-price contract. We also understand that USFOR-A and others were considering a number of options for supporting U.S. forces post-2014. These options included using the LOGCAP contract as it is presently written, using a fixed-price LOGCAP contract, or using a different approach such as having the NATO Support Agency provide base life support services. We also understand that as of early February a decision on the base life support contract has yet to be made.

Has the decision been made regarding how base life support will be provided to U.S. forces during Resolute Support? a. If a decision has been made, can you please explain what course of action you selected and what factors or circumstances led you to select that course of action? b. If no decision has been made at this time, what is holding up the decision? Specifically, what decisions need to be made prior to selecting a base life support course of action? c. Do you have concerns that if an alternative to the current LOGCAP cost-plus contract is not selected in the near future there will be no alternative but to use the current cost-plus contract because of the time it takes to award and transition a contract?

General DUNFORD. I believe this question would be best answered by U.S. Central Command.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. BRIDENSTINE

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. U.S. and coalition forces operate in Afghanistan principally in vehicles with armored cabs or mine-resistant vehicles. An armored cab was designed and tested for the Medium Tactical Vehicle that the U.S. provided to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). More than 200 were delivered to our Afghan allies. The armored cab solution could potentially be a very cost-effective alternative to provide the ANSF ballistic and blast protection. Can you tell me why we haven't considered a broader application of this upgrade?

News reports indicate that the U.S. is not providing the ANSF MRAP vehicles that the U.S. has deemed excess because they are too expensive for the Afghans to maintain. Is this accurate? If so, can you please provide the analysis that was done that arrived at this determination?

Bottom line, are you satisfied that we are proceeding on the most cost-effective and thoughtful approach to provide resources to the ANSF?

General DUNFORD. Blast and automotive testing for this armored cab design of the Medium Tactical Vehicle is still an ongoing effort. We have considered a broader application of this armored cab upgrade but believe it to be too complex and cost prohibitive to implement at this time. Nearly 100% of the vehicles that the coalition has procured for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will have been delivered to Afghanistan and fielded by the time the results of blast testing are complete. The capabilities provided through the Mobile Strike Force Vehicle (MSFV), HMMWV, and Light Tactical Vehicle have been proven over the course of the past decade and now must be effectively sustained.

We are considering providing MRAPs to the ANSF, but a final decision has not been made. The resources required to repair, field, train, and integrate existing MRAPs adds to the sustainment burden of currently fielded ANSF vehicles. In addition to annual MRAP sustainment costs, the cost to demilitarize and refurbish the MRAPs before transfer must be considered along with the facilities, maintenance and support infrastructure, and driver and operator training programs that must be developed to support these vehicles.

We are committed to developing and executing a synchronized strategy as we continue to turn our focus to the sustainment of the capabilities we have fielded and helped develop in the ANSF. As this strategy develops through discussions and the

combined effort of our Afghan and coalition partners, we continually assess our approach to providing resources and equipment to ensure an enduring capability within the ANSF.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. WALORSKI

Mrs. WALORSKI. President Karzai released 65 detainees from an Afghan-controlled prison at Bagram airfield on February 13, 2014. All of these detainees were initially captured by U.S. forces and subsequently handed over to the Government of Afghanistan, and all of them were associated with groups with whom the United States is currently fighting in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and the Haqqani Network. Some were directly responsible for American casualties, and many specialize in IEDs. In addition, some of the detainees were linked to terrorist financing.

It's reasonable to assume that we still have a good number of detainees who have not yet been turned over to the Afghans. Whether Enduring Security Threats (ESTs)—the highest threat Afghan detainees—or other categories of detainees, what detainees are currently being held, and what is the likelihood that Karzai will seek to release them?

What will happen to ESTs post-2014, both the ones currently under our control, as well as those currently under Afghan control? What will happen to other categories of detainees?

General DUNFORD. As of 14 March 2014, there are approximately 1170 Afghan detainees under Afghan control at the Afghan National Detention Facility—Parwan (ANDF—P). Of the 1170 detainees under Afghan control; 621 are in pre-trial confinement and 482 are serving their sentence as dictated by trial outcome at the Justice Center in Parwan (JCIP). Separately, approximately 50 Third Country National (TCN) detainees from 13 countries are under U.S. control at the ANDF—P.

Of the pre-trial detainees under Afghan control, there are 58 whose cases are awaiting adjudication by the Afghan Review Board (ARB). The ARB is a non-judicial body established in accordance with the 25 March 2013 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to assist in the legal review of criminal case files recently transferred over to GIRoA from U.S. control. The ARB has not yet adjudicated these 58 files. Soon after its establishment, the ARB fell under malign political influence and ultimately made legal decisions that exceeded its mandate. Previously the ARB has issued release decisions on over 650 of the 900 detainees who fell under its jurisdiction. Many of those who were released by the ARB had substantial evidence warranting immediate prosecution or further investigation. The ARB will make disposition decisions regarding the 58 detainee files followed by adjudication at the JCIP in accordance with Afghan law.

By contrast, current judicial actions by the JCIP have resulted in a 74% prosecution rate. Based on his recent statements in the media, and past actions, we assess it is possible that President Karzai will seek to release more detainees, with the remaining ARB decisions to be among the most likely to be released. There are approximately 15 TCN ESTs under U.S. control. It is our plan that the 15 TCN ESTs will be repatriated to their home countries, tried or released, pending U.S. policy guidance. They may also be transferred to Afghan control for criminal prosecution or release.

Excluding the approximately 15 TCN ESTs noted, there are approximately 35 additional non-EST TCN detainees under U.S. control. It is our plan that these 35 TCNs will be repatriated to their home countries, transferred to Afghan control, released, or tried in Afghanistan, the U.S., or the home country pending U.S. policy guidance.

Separately, the Afghan government will either criminally prosecute or release the approximately 41 ESTs under Afghan control (which are part of the 58 pending ARB cases referenced previously). Under the March 2013 MOU, the Afghan government committed specifically to the continued detention of these 41 ESTs. For Afghan detainees, it is our desire that the Afghan government will continue to leverage the JCIP as a Central National Security Court. We also intend for the ANDF—P to be part of an enduring National Security Justice Center for pre-trial confinement, investigation, prosecution, and post-trial incarceration of individuals who commit terror and insurgent-related crimes.

Mrs. WALORSKI. I am concerned about Iranian activity and influence in western Afghanistan. Your predecessor, General John Allen, testified before the Senate in 2012 that "Iran continues to support the insurgency and fan the flames of violence."

What is Iran currently doing to support the insurgency, whether financial support, supplying weapons, providing training and logistics support, or direct attacks on U.S. or coalition forces?

General DUNFORD. We believe Iran has provided measured assistance, weapons, and training to insurgents in Afghanistan, likely since at least 2002. Iran has historically backed Tajik and Shi'a groups opposed to the Afghan Taliban, but tensions and enmity with the West have driven Tehran to provide measured support to insurgents in Afghanistan. Over the years, coalition forces have seized several weapons' shipments near the Iranian border that were almost certainly of Iranian origin. Iran also likely trained insurgents inside Iranian territory. Iran calibrates the size and scope of the lethal aid it provides the insurgency, likely so the insurgents can target ISAF and Coalition Forces, but without endangering the Afghan government.

